
DEVELOPING A MARKETING PLAN FOR HELP JSC



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ABSTRACT

Health care has become an extremely important issue during the economic development. Vietnamese rapid population growth has made the service sector become overloaded. Majority of people are absorbed at work and neither do take care of their health nor do have a proper health care programme. HELP, a health care service company, has discovered general ideas of its services: brings health, joy and happiness to people. It is no later than now to develop a marketing plan, which can enhance the business performance.

The aim of the thesis is to figure out a comprehensive marketing framework, which is included solid background for further development in the future. From different perspectives and experiences, the researcher has summarized strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the business.

In marketing concepts, which were based on theoretical views, some literatures have been used. Most of them are written by Armstrong & Kotler (2008), Hill Elizabeth & Terry O'Sullivan (1999), Walker and Mullins (2006). Marian Burk Wood (2007). In addition, some other books, which are relevant to the marketing strategies, were also applied in the thesis.

The qualitative research method was applied to collect various points of views, experiences and expectations from the respondents who occupy key positions at HELP. All together it took more than one month to collect the data requirement, mostly in June 2010. Moreover, the material was also collected from HELP's research and internet resources. Furthermore, it was regularly discussed with HELP's manager, the thesis advisor, mainly by emails.

It was discussed that HELP has a potential market growth to expand its business. Nevertheless, during the marketing plan process, it was recognized that besides increasing service diversity, HELP should develop preferable services on target customers, e.g. focus more on nursing services and personal doctors. In addition, professional staffs and medical ethics are the two biggest issues that HELP need to pay attention to find out the solution.

In conclusion, HELP owns a potential success in health care sector. The young and passionate team all together has created successful networks and relationships. For further actions to success, it is about consuming time to explore the skills and build a reliable business brand.

Keywords Marketing, marketing plan, health care services, Vietnam, HELP Joint Stock Company

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Company introduction

Company profile

HELP JSC was founded in November 2009 with main idea of creating new and excellent healthcare services. This business opens a prospect of successfully launching a leading enterprise in Vietnam, which offers outstanding and reliable healthcare services for the populous country. HELP is registered as a joint stock company; it has a solid background of 19 internal core persons who are in the operation process, together with more than 20 positions of sponsors and consultants who are in field of business, technique, marketing and law. For the long run of preparation about 10 months, HELP is expected to get the target customers by the beginning of October 2010.

Reasons to establish the company

According to HELP research, the average healthcare cost for each individual is still too low compare with other countries. Among 191 countries, which have the best healthcare services, Vietnam is in rank of 130. Moreover, the enterprises loose a big amount of money due to bad health of workers. The research has found one more crucial issue: each single unit of currency which is invested to health check is equal with 20 times of the currency for treatment and 100 times for emergent case. In fact, the process of health care checking is not that simple when patients still need to spend a lot time for waiting at the hospital or clinic. As the result of less sufficient caring system, health insurance is not the priority choice for many people as well as it does not have its full effect. Furthermore, there is one common problem for most populous countries is that the labor forces are not yet considered as golden assets to the organization. Thus, there is corruption that directly affects the working efficiency. Vietnam is on the way to improve innovation; integration and economic development, therefore majority of young people are pursuing success and forgetting to take care of themselves. And that is such a paradox of life because when getting old people are ready to change all heritage to buy health but not sure they can afford.

Today people die from chronic diseases, which are very often self-created by us from our way of life. Today our health is a result of our lifestyle that we have chosen.

Products and services

During the preparation and operation process, HELP focuses on two types of customers: individuals and enterprises or institutions. HELP simply wants to be the Healthcare center that could connect Doctor Network and Customers by simple and modern technologies. By that new medical visits will be easy as buying a book on Amazon or coffee from Starbucks coffee.

For individual customers, when a person registers to use HELP's service, he will be granted an individual doctor, called Personal Doctor. This doctor is responsible for close following the customer health situation and checking regularly. More than that, this personal doctor is also able to set up a particular health care programme, which is suited with the customer's lifestyle, also called Re-design Your Lifestyle Programme. This programme will organize and find out what are the best suits for each person according to his physical and current diseases. With this programme, the customers can up-date their health information and they are advised to develop a healthy and active life. By that, customers will become the best doctor of their own.

For the business enterprises, when the organization contracts with HELP to receive health care advice for their workers, each employee will be given a Personal Doctor and an exclusive Re-design Lifestyle Programme. However, the unique point is that HELP will measure the Health Index number of the whole business. By showing the data visually, HELP is able to prove their participation to the organization whether the Health Index is held up or not. The purpose is to increase the business performance, which can indicate that how healthy employees can work more efficiently. Once the enterprise is advised to reach higher business performance, the Personal Doctor Programme provides a competitive solution to attract the talents, increase remuneration and create an ideal working environment. Thereby, the employees will be cared from mental to physical factors. Workers' health becomes not only a golden value of private individuals but also golden asset of the organizations. There will be more details about services and products developing strategy in the chapter of company analysis.

Mission – Vision – Core Values

HELP JSC is strongly fighting for the mission of business itself: always providing products and services better than any other sector companies, bringing joy and happiness to people. Quality must be the top priority. As a new joint stock company, HELP trains its people to be consistent with the company culture, those who are real engaged to improve lives, health, education and work for the community.

HELP's vision is to become a corporation providing health solution in Vietnam, bringing Vietnam to become a country with successful and reliable health care in Asia. The desire is to improve living standards, make medical examination be more simple and convenient. As the result, life expectancy will be increased, people live healthier and happier.

HELP was named by the combination of help, care, devotion and openness, which are considered as core values of the business. Even though the company is new, HELP aspires to overcome the current medical situation to reach the top service quality. HELP is penetrating in friendly service, caring, professional and precise. Moreover, HELP is on the way of continual development, always maintaining the core and promoting progress. Last but not least, business honesty and ethics are also the goals towards the core values.

Target market

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) has more than 7 million citizens, the most crowded city in Vietnam (<http://hochiminhcity.gov.vn>, 2009).

It is obvious that HCMC is the crucial target. Fortunately, HELP has the main office located in Ho Chi Minh City.

Due to HELP's market research, HELP targeted to reach 5 enterprises contract and 500 individuals during the first three months deployment. In the first year of implementation the service, HELP determines to have 30 corporate customers and 2000 individual customers. In fact, for such a populous and demanding market, it is reasonable for HELP to expect 1 million customers in Ho Chi Minh City and neighboring provinces. Due to high demand, the number of customers indeed increases in the whole country once the brand and images of HELP spreading. Consequently this study will provide the information which can help HELP to analyze various aspects of a comprehensive marketing plan.

1.2 Research question and topic

Although HELP has figured out the idea of establishing healthcare services, there is still one big question that each single business always solves it out. The question is:

How does HELP prepare for basic start-up and long term running, specifically in marketing planning term?

This research therefore will bring back different relevant aspects which are most related to set up a marketing plan. In addition, the outcome will support the basic foundation for HELP to clearly identify its potential opportunities. Indeed, suggestions and recommendations are expected for further improvement during the strategic and planning process.

The research topic is: Developing a successful marketing plan for HELP. It is desired by both of the writer and the company to find out the comprehensive marketing plan in order to make HELP become the leading firm in healthcare service sector. The fact is that the topic is generally wide for researching and analyzing deeply, in each detail, therefore, the topic as such will focus on some issues which are essentially important for HELP at the beginning of entering the market. However, the general needed information for the plan will be covered. The sub-questions according the research topic are shortly defined:

- a. How to identify the potential market?
- b. What is the environmental analysis and company analysis?
- c. How to build up the company reputation (image) and increase customer awareness?
- d. How HELP JSC processes with the financial plan?
- e. What are suggestions for the current and the coming future marketing plan of HELP?

1.3 Objectives

There are three objectives which were agreed between the thesis writer, the supervisor and the company commissioning. They are:

- a. Finding out a comprehensive marketing plan (for a small and new company)

- b. Evaluating the current situation of HELP (how HELP makes a good foundation to reach the target markets)
- c. Presenting recommendations how to improve the current marketing strategy.

The research topic is to find out a successful marketing plan for HELP in the stage of reforming, hence it is reasonable to give HELP a good marketing plan firstly in theory. The aim is to provide some examples and discussions by the supported theory under the marketing framework generally. By that, HELP will be able to be developed from a solid foundation and self-reflected its current position. The second research objective is to providing valuable information of HELP currently. This objective is to answer what makes HELP stand stably, what makes HELP interesting to customers. The outcome will give HELP and its staff a deeper understanding about the present. By that, this evaluation is extremely useful to make changes adaptable with their strengths and weaknesses. The third objective is also the final objective which will give recommendations to create a better a strategy to reach the target market. Most of the suggestions are from HELP staffs' perspectives and the business consultants.

2 THERIOTICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Review of a successful marketing plan

Definition

A marketing plan is a format includes specific outlines of aims and objectives for a brand, product or company; includes activities, expenditures and forecasts to develop a successful strategies and actions. A marketing plan has some specific roles such as doing researching or establishing customer relationships. It will give up-to-date information about the market environment, the target segmentations, the competition and the offered products. It helps the company to stay stable, profitable and make the organization run smoothly. Moreover, a good marketing plan can increase sales and spread the market share. Building a good marketing plan means to find out where you are and where you are going to (Mortimer R. 2009). Marketing planning will conduct a research, which deeply understanding customers' expectation and satisfaction. Its result is not only needed to build a solid firm's foundation, but also important to gain competitive advantages. A marketing plan is a preparation to list of

actions. With a detailed plan, any business will be better prepared to launch a new product or build sales for existing products (Armstrong and Kotler 2008, 575). In other words, marketing plan is a plan with well-prepared activities to face different situations and uncertainties.

Reason to build a marketing plan

When the markets are big and products are highly competing selected, companies need to re-organize themselves to serve suitably the customers. Especially young and new entrepreneurs are seeking to avoid risks and embrace uncertainties. It is significantly important to make a plan. It can be hundred pages or few pages for a small company, but a good marketing plan can attract investors and talents to get involve to the business.

Essential component of a marketing plan

How a marketing plan is like? Under many discussions and plan, a marketing plan, which is entire to develop for product or a plan in general should have an executive summary, current marketing situation, SWOT analysis, marketing strategies, budgets and controls.

According to Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong, a marketing plan has contents as the table below.

Section	Purpose
Executive summary	Presents a quick overview of the plan for quick management review.
Current marketing situation	The marketing audit that presents background data on the market, product, competition and distribution.
SWOT analysis	Identifies the company's main strengths and weaknesses, the main opportunities and threats facing the product.
Objectives and issues	Defines the company's objectives in the areas of sales, market share and profits, and the issues that will affect these objectives.
Marketing strategy	Presents the broad marketing approach that will be used to achieve the plan's objectives.
Marketing Mix	Seven Ps: Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Physical Evidence, Process
Marketing implementation	Specifies what will be done, who will do it, when it will be done and what it will cost.
Budgets	A projected profit and loss statement that forecasts the expected financial outcomes from

	the plan
Controls	Indicates how the progress of the plan will be monitoring.

Table 1: Contents of a marketing plan (Kotler P.& Armstrong G. 2008)

To be more effective, a marketing plan should cover a marketing research, which is covered the information requirements, the research methodology and finally the result is mostly important. For a new constructing company such as HELP, different marketing research methodologies are extremely important to make sense of what has happened, what is happening or what is going to happen (Balnaves 2001, 27). In later chapter of this research, there will be introduction about the research methodology.

Continue with the marketing components, Marian Burk Wood said that no marketing plan lasts forever, thus some alternative plans in mind that might be implemented if significant changes occur (Wood 2007, 4). Therefore, the planning activities and the strategic decisions need to be flexible during the marketing planning process. As the figure below, Marian developed the sections that provide an overview of all steps:

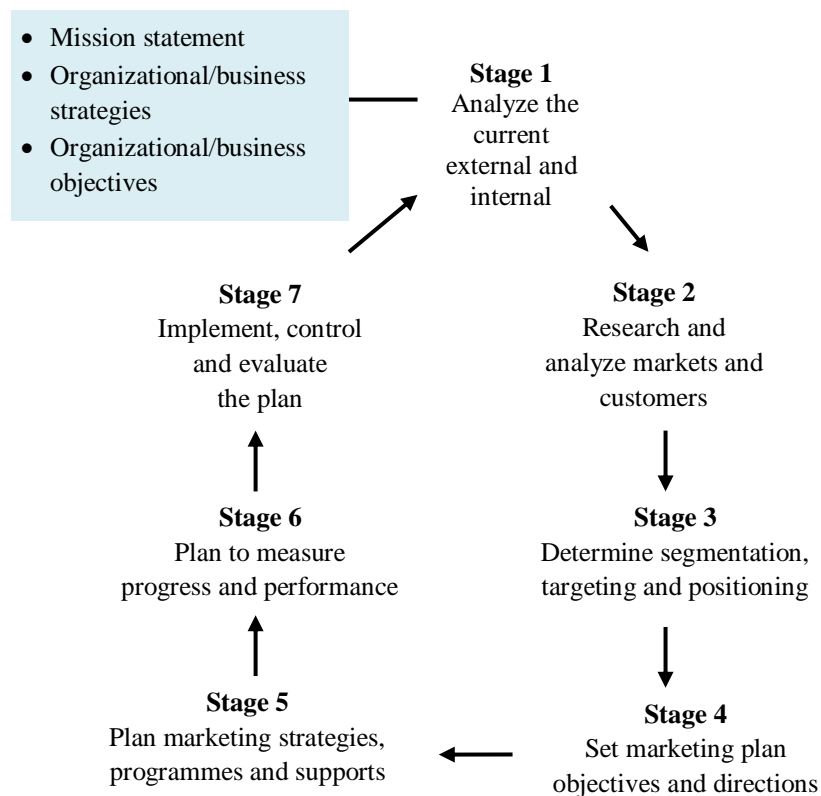


Figure 1: The marketing planning process (Wood M. B. 2007, 5)

2.2 Analyzing the current situation

Environmental analysis

Macro-environment

What does it mean by “environment”? Elizabeth Hill and Terry O’Sullivan concluded that the marketing environment consists of those factors outside the immediate control of the firm which influence its relationship with its target customers (Hill 1999, 53). Professor Don E Schultz of Northwestern University also agreed that marketing and the market place are dynamic system (Wood 2007, 22). Thus, an effective marketing plan needs to cover one of the key factors: the macro-environment.

Marco-environment includes factors that affect firms such as social-cultural environment, demographic environment, cultural environment; economic environment, technological environment or political influences. Elizabeth defined that macro-environment comprises a complex set of uncontrollable variables which collectively from a framework within

which organizations conduct business (Hill & Terry 1999, 54). Although the company is influenced by the societal forces, these forces shape opportunities and pose threats to the company (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 124).

One of the first elements that changes marketing decision is the demographic environment. Armstrong and Kotler (2009, 100) agreed that studying about human population in terms of size, density, location, age, gender, race, occupation is major interest to marketers. One interesting sample for this is the Chinese one-child rule, which is creating a generation that has been pampered by parents and grandparents. As the result it makes more purchases and creates better opportunities for marketers (2009, 101). Aging structure has different purchasing decisions. The buying power is different according to the work, responsibilities and relationships by young group, middle group and old group.

The second element under macro-environment is the economic environment which is mostly depending on the level of income, level of debt, and the local; regional; national and even global economic trends (Wood 2007, 29). With quite similar and more details, Elizabeth Hill concluded that the key factors of the economic environments are income distribution, recession, taxation, interest rates, inflation, exchange rate and the 'feel-good factor'(1999, 60). Perhaps the income distribution is the most important factor that the marketers need to keep a close eye on. The proportion of expenditure can vary unevenly by spending on food and luxury goods. With the higher income, people can spend more on expensive things instead of buying food and cheap things. Particularly, Elizabeth came to conclusion that there is a significant trend that an economy can be divided into two different characterized groups: one is very sensitive with pricing, tend to buy with low prices and one is willing to pay higher prices for better quality and features (Hill 1999, 59)

Economic factors	Affection
Income distribution	Income distribution is important to marketers because the there is different purchasing patterns from the rich to the poor. One group is likely to be very price sensitive while the other group is willing to pay much higher prices in return for superior quality.
Recession	Recession reduces the total income and expenditure. Potential customers reduce their expenditure, especially most on durables.
Taxation	Taxation diverts money from the private sector of economy to the public sector. Direct taxes determine the amount of disposable income that consumers can spend on goods on their own choosing, while Indirect taxes increase prices of goods to the consumers.
Interest rates	Interest rates can significantly impact on consumer willingness to make non-essential purchases. Low interest rates can make demand increase disproportionately while under high rates; marketing emphasis may have to be refocused, concentrating on the competition of attracting a proportion of the lower of level demand that remains.
Inflation	Businesses might do well in short term with large quantities of higher price, but in long term, it raises the cost production as well as prevents their profit margins; then businesses may have to raise the price again. From marketing perspective, inflation can endanger international trade, because of the falling sales of expensive products in foreign countries, which do not have similar inflationary pressure.
Exchange rate	Exchange rate affects international trade. When one country's currency increases in value; products become more expensive in oversea markets. On the contrary, the prices paid by foreign consumers will fall and demand increase when exchange rate fall.
The "feel-good factor"	It reflects government's confidence, people's hopes and fears in future, their perceived wealth and expectations for future income and employment.

Table 2: Summarize by the researcher according to Elizabeth Hill (1999)

The third factor is the natural environment which is needed to study about natural resources and environmental concerns. As a big result of highly technology development, markets and marketing activities are influenced by environmental changes and raw material. Through Kotler focuses, natural environment is considered as important inputs that companies are recognizing the link between a healthy ecology and a healthy economy. Consequently, the more environmentally response actions, the better business can be (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009, 112). In the Marketing Management (Kotler, 1997, 157) Kotler also mentioned the trend of natural environment of increasing cost of energy and levels of pollution. His research has shown that 42% of the U.S. consumers are willing to pay higher prices for 'green' products. Today, we have good examples of improving in product recycling such as MacDonal'd's and Burger King, or Hesburger (Finland) that are using small and recyclable wrapping paper.

The fourth factor is the technological environment. Armstrong stated that it is perhaps the most dramatic force now shaping our destination (2009, 113). Indeed, the influence by rapid change in technology is one of the reasons to make HELP founded. Research and development perhaps leads technology grow faster. In the other words, companies who can adapt quicker with new technological standards can obtain more opportunities and avoid the threats such as solution for viruses, data security, etc.

Last but not least, macro-environment gives the marketers one more study about the influences of the political trends. Marketing decisions on the other hand limited by the political and legal environment which is included laws and rules by the government agencies. Marian Burk Wood stated that businesses and marketers need to cover legally the issues of competitive behavior, pricing, taxation, promotion, distribution product liability, and labeling and product purity (Wood 2008, 32). Political environment plays an important role to protect businesses from unfair competition and to protect consumers from unfair business practice. Since businesses are not only running locally but also internationally, legal protection is becoming more and more important. Many law frameworks are changed to adapt with new business environment. Thus, lawyers are part of every business to provide comprehensive procedures and ethical standards.

Micro-environment

Elizabeth Hill stated that micro-environment includes forces that directly affect the running of a business and over which that business has some controls (1999, 79).

In this part, the success of each company requires itself to be able to link the company with suppliers, marketing intermediaries, customer markets, competitors and publics. This network is a close relationship between

marketing and other actors in the micro-environment. This figure shows the impact on the marketing department by other department.

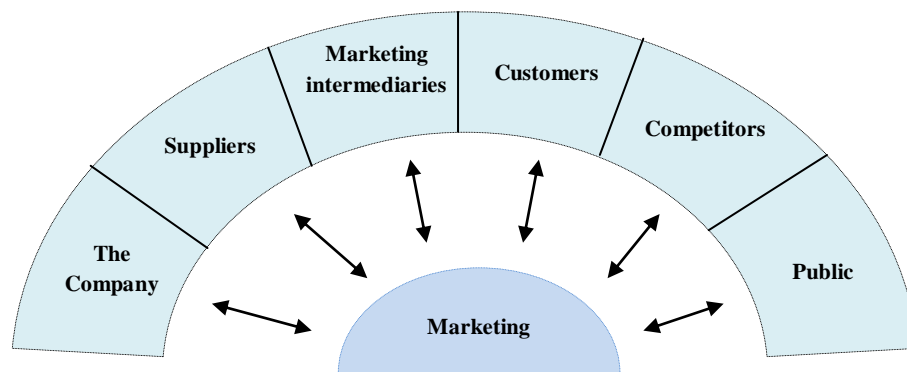


Figure 2: Actors in the Microenvironment (Armstrong & Kotler 2009, 97)

In general, designing marketing plan is a task of linking closely marketing department with other company departments such as management, finance, R&D, sales, operations and accounting. The top managements are responsible for setting company's missions, objectives and strategies. The marketing managers make decisions within that plans and strategies.

In addition, under the micro-environment, customers are the key factor who will buy the products or services which are identified as market segments or demand. According to Elizabeth Hill, the marketers need to understand the potential customers who make as expansion of the market. They need to figure out the profiles of customers, included characteristics, age, education, etc. This knowledge will enable organizations to decide their products feature, pricing strategy, and promoting message.

Moreover, according to Elizabeth (1999, 67) marketers can list and find out the answers toward the customers for some questions, for instant:

- What are customers' needs to buy this product? Is there any particular feature that can satisfy them?
- Why do customers choose this product instead of another one? What is the difference?
- How the product is valuable to customers?
- Which information influences their buying decision?

Although customer markets are large, the "Principles of marketing" book has divided it into 6 different groups as figure below:

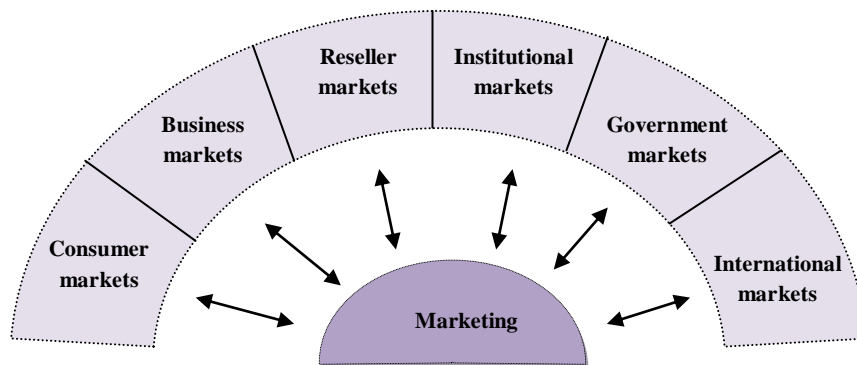


Figure 3: Types of customer market (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 182)

Besides the customer markets, companies are advised to position their offerings. The point is to enrich the alternative choices for customers, which makes customers more satisfied than other competitors. Elizabeth Hill divided competitors into four categories: direct competitors and indirect competitors, substitutes and new entrants:

	Similar products	Different products
Similar customer needs	Direct competitors	Substitutes
Different customer needs	Indirect competitors	New entrants

Barriers to entry

The diagram shows a 2x2 matrix with 'Similar customer needs' on the top row and 'Different customer needs' on the bottom row. The columns are 'Similar products' and 'Different products'. A diagonal line runs from the top-right to the bottom-left, with an arrow pointing to it from the text 'Barriers to entry' located between the two rows.

Figure 4: Competitor typologies (Hill & O’Sullivan 1999, 68)

According to Elizabeth Hill, direct competitors mean that companies sell products that have similar physical characteristics on the market, such as Pepsi and Coca-Cola or Ford and General Motors, or Meira and Paulig in Finland. On the other hand, indirect competitors are about customer services. Companies have similar products but they serve customers

differently. However, though one business may have direct or indirect competitors, they are all described as being in the same industry. Substitutes are competitors selling different products but satisfying the same needs. Finally, new entrants are new competitors enter into the markets (Hill 1999, 70).

Furthermore, the company's marketing environment includes some types of publics. According to Armstrong & Kotler, there are 7 types of publics that have an impact on an organization.

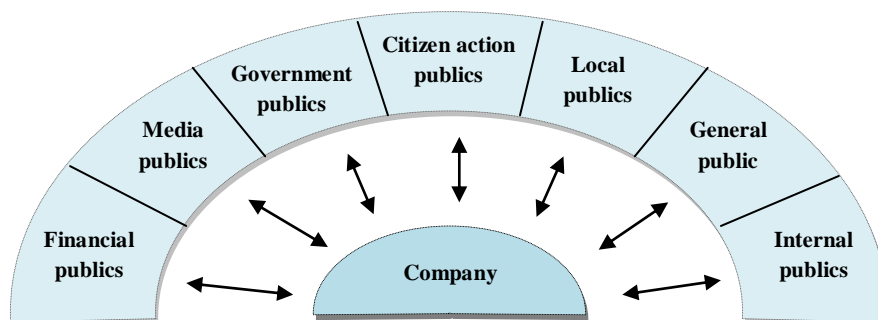


Figure 5: Types of public (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 183)

Although marketing plays an important role in terms of promoting and selling products, companies still need to deliver their product through the marketing intermediaries. They include resellers, physical distribution intermediaries, marketing agencies or financial intermediaries. In later chapter of this research, there will be more details of how HELP deliver the products through intermediaries systems.

Last but not least, each single organization needs a supplier for the resources such as raw materials, packages, goods, services, equipments or machinery. Dealing with suppliers is a carefully activity for marketing managers since they have to consider the price and quality of company's products. Elizabeth concluded that if suppliers are more powerful than buyers, then it is a disadvantage for a small company. Why? A big supplier may offer higher prices to those small orders as the cost of supplying is proportionately high in comparison with the value of those orders (1999, 73)

Besides these factors, under the micro-environment, there are also influences from stakeholders for examples banks, business investors, media groups, etc.

2.3 Introduce to SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis is a method used to analyze the business environment. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Regarding to Philip Kotler and Armstrong, SWOT analysis draws critical items with contain of important and reliable data (2008, 135). SWOT shows possible actions that the business should focus with more attention in order to defend or expand the market. SWOT technique can be applied through activities, operation, forecasts, etc. in relation with particular subjects. SWOT analysis is a good step of marketing plan which can provide evidence and basic identifies of both internal (strengths and weaknesses) and external (opportunities and threats) factors.

Strengths and weaknesses

It is important to list what are the most critical success factors of the organization. Armstrong & Kotler in the principle of marketing book strongly emphasized that the strengths and weaknesses are relative, not absolute (2009, 138). In the facts, strengths can be dangerous if the business cannot be able to manage the strengths extended. Once again, strengths and weaknesses are discussed parallel with competition. Others listed as strengths can be skills, capabilities and knowledge. Major weaknesses are usually about negative appraisals of advertising campaign and promotion budgets, overall performance, communication, leadership skills or motivation, etc.

Opportunities and threats

Based on company faces, the marketers can analyze the factors that could impact on the organizations. For instant, technology development, demographic or socio-economic factors may bring many opportunities to the firms. While politics, competition or environmental changes may bring adverse impacts, they threaten the businesses.

2.4 An overview of company's objectives and issues

As discussed in the previous chapter of SWOT analyzes, the marketing managers are now able to figure out what the company wants to attain. Clear and explicit marketing objectives are the key to make decision and improve overall performance. Timberry and Doug Wilson in the Book on Marketing plans (2001, 107) stated that setting marketing objectives together with marketing strategy and marketing programme is likely to

produce desired performance and long term goals. The figure shows how marketing objectives drive marketing planning:



Figure 6: Strategy pyramid (Wood 2007, 83)

Before the marketing plan objectives are set, the organization may consider to grow or not because sometimes growth is not an appropriate direction. For a growth strategy, H.Igor Ansoff proposed four main growth strategies: market penetration, product development, market development and diversification. (Wood 2007, 84)

Marian had summarized the growth and non-growth strategies as the following figure:

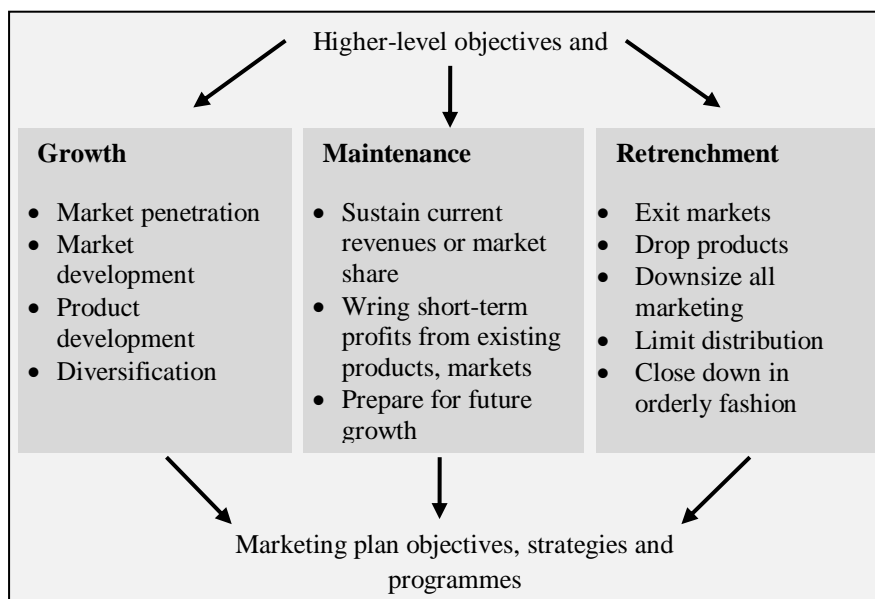


Figure 7: Choices of marketing plan direction (Wood 2007, 84)

Besides the preparation needed before setting marketing plan objectives, Marian Burk (2007, 86) set 6 critical factors that the objectives should be: relevant, specific and measurable, time defined, realistic, challenging and consistent. She also mentioned that marketing plan objectives are short-term targets, however when the action programme is done, it will make the organization move closer to the long-term targets. The objectives will be more focused and detailed in later chapter of exploring HELP’s plan. Nevertheless, in the perfect theory, Marian recommended to set objectives in three categories: financial objectives, marketing objectives and societal objectives. 3 tables which are summarized by Marian shortly introduce how marketing plan objectives are set.

Focus of financial objective	Purpose and examples
<p>External results</p>	<p>To provide targets for outcomes of marketing activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing unit or monetary sales by geographic market • Increasing unit or monetary sales by customer segment • Increasing unit or monetary sales by product • Increasing unit or monetary sales by channel • Other objectives
<p>Internal requirements</p>	<p>To provide targets for managing marketing to meet organizational requirement such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving break-even status • Achieving profitability level • Achieving return on investment levels • Other objectives

Figure 8.1: Focus and purpose of financial objectives (Wood 2007, 88)

Focus of marketing objectives	Purpose and examples
<p>External relationships</p>	<p>To provide targets for managing relations with customers and other stakeholders such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing brand, product, company image • Building brand awareness and preference • Stimulating product trial • Acquiring new customers • Retaining existing customers • Increasing customer satisfaction • Acquiring or defending market share • Expanding or defending distribution • Other relationship objectives
<p>Internal activities</p>	<p>To provide targets for managing specific marketing activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing output or speed of new product development • Improving product quality • Streamlining order fulfillment • Managing resources to enter new markets or segments • Conducting marketing research • Other objectives

Figure 8.2: Focus and purpose of marketing objective (Wood 2007, 90)

Focus of societal objectives	Purpose and examples
<p>Ecological protection</p>	<p>To provide targets for managing related to ecological protection and sustainability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing pollution with natural or “greener” products, ecologically friendly processes • Doing business with “greener” suppliers and channel members • Reducing waste by redesigning products and processes for recycling, other efficiencies • Conserving use of natural resources • Other relationship objectives
<p>Social responsibility and stakeholder relations</p>	<p>To provide targets for managing marketing relating to social responsibility and stakeholder relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a positive image as a good corporate citizen • Supporting designated charities, community projects, human right group and others, with money and marketing • Encouraging volunteering among employees, customers, suppliers, channel members • Communicating with stakeholders to understand their concerns and explain societal activities • Other objectives

Figure 8.3: Focus and purpose of societal objectives (Wood 2007, 91)

2.5 Overview of the marketing strategy theory

Kotler and Armstrong (2008, 156) agreed that there are too many kinds of consumers with too many different kinds of needs and in the competitive marketplace, companies need to divide the total market to the best

segments and design strategies for profitably serving chosen segments. Indeed, marketing strategy requires a deep understanding of customer in different segments. Only by that, companies may be able to win competitors and satisfy customers. According to Kotler and Armstrong, designing a marketing strategy includes market segmentation, target marketing and marketing positioning.

2.5.1 Market segmentation

Imagine the country - Vietnam with more than 86 million people, and the biggest - Ho Chi Minh City with almost 10 million people, how big is the market? The answer is that the market is huge, and it is difficult to say which product is the first choice in the market because there are different wants and needs for different people. Since consumers do not buy the same way, companies have to identify market segment and offer products for each segment. The smaller groups with specific features are, the easier and faster the marketers can reach them. So how marketers can divide the market into reasonable segments? According to Kotler (2008, 410), it is based on geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioral studies. Kotler also introduced four important segmentation topics: segmenting consumer markets, segmenting business markets, segmenting international markets and requirements for effective segmentation.

This table below shortly summarizes the requirement for effective segmentation:

Requirement	Description
Measurable	Size, purchasing power and profits of a market segments should be measured.
Accessible	The market segments can be effectively reached and served.
Substantial	The market segment can be large and profitable enough to serve. It should be the largest possible group worth pursuing with a tailored marketing program.
Differentiable	The segments should be conceptually distinguishable and have different marketing mix elements and programs.
Actionable	To attract serve the segments, there should be effective program designed

Table 3: Requirements for effective segmentation (Summarized by the researcher based on Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 423)

2.5.2 Target marketing

After targeting the market, it is time to decide which target markets need to be focused. Even though the target markets may be unstructured, one of the first roles of the marketers is to identify the market size, growth and segment attractiveness. Consequence, serving the right target market with relative resources needed may earn more potential profit than serving the largest segment. Kotler states that the largest, fastest growing segments are not always the most attractive ones for every company (2008, 423).

Nevertheless, even if the company has chosen the most attractive one to serve, there are still needed right objectives and long-term goals to go. Therefore, increasing the marketing differentiation is the pilot strategy. Kotler once again insisted that targeting marketing strategies can be differed from targeting broadly to targeting narrowly. As we can see by the figure below:

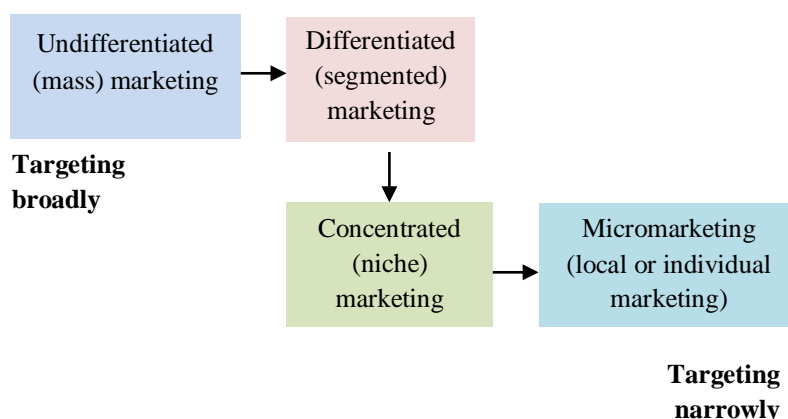


Figure 9: Targeting marketing strategies in different levels (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 424)

Undifferentiated marketing is a strategy when a company decides to offer the whole market with only one offer. They are focus on common needs instead of differentiating the market segments.

Differentiated marketing strategy is about the strategy when a company has several market segments and they also have several offers for each segment. By this way, consumers have more choices on the market, which will help companies to increase total sales and market share.

The term of concentrated marketing means that a product will be highly designed for a particular market. Concentrated marketing is particularly suited for small companies with limited resources. However, concentrated marketing strategies help to market more efficiently and profitable. In fact, companies have greater ability of achieving stronger market position

because of its greater knowledge. Moreover, there are more opportunities to get quick return on investment from well-defined market.

The term of micromarketing is related to differentiated and concentrated marketing. Micromarketing requires marketers to serve closer with the consumers. There are more focuses on specific individuals and well-defined locations. There might be some obstacles when the firms try to meet requirements for different local markets, such as logistics problem, message transferring, high costs and time consumed, etc. However, with the high speed of internet and technology development, micromarketing is getting easier than ever to reach each individual carefully.

2.5.3 Market differentiation and positioning

Although market segmentations have been chosen, products have not set a position yet. Consumers as well as buying power are pretty much affected by brands or product's position in customers' minds. What companies need first is to explore whether their product occupying a place in customers' minds yet. We may question why product's position is so important in every marketing strategy? The answer is that markets are growing fast with various products of different brands. Competitors are competing to save a good place in their market positioning. Consequently, customers can easily get confused of their best choices. Thus, successful companies set a successful positioning map that can make consumers feel comfortable when choosing their products. To set a positioning map, marketers can use figure for instant based on price and performance, etc. Nevertheless, it is not always easy to set apart with competitors when they have similar positioning strategy. Kotler (2008, 435) indicated that each firm should build unique offers to targeted segment by differentiate customer values and competitive advantages. For instant each firm can build better quality or services, different communicating methods and different delivering or packaging methods.

On the other hand, differences do not always bring success to companies. Therefore, not all companies are necessary to seek for differences in products' positioning. Each difference may concern to potential benefits but it also includes risks. The point is how to make clear position, convince brand and avoid risks. Again, Kotler (2008, 441) concluded that promoting brand by creating differences is worth establishing if it could cover the following criterias: important, distinctive, superior, communicable, pre-emptive, affordable and profitable.

Indeed, highly successful brands come when they can do more than promises. Customers do not use the product once and many come back for worthy reasons. By that, positions which have been built for years can be lost when products' images could not stay stable. Good positions need to be together with good strategies and comfortable adapts to the marketing environment.

2.6 Marketing Mix theory – A brief overview 7 Ps

Product/Service

Product is anything that offered to a market for use, consumption or attention, to satisfy a want or need. Products include physical object, services, persons, places, organizations, ideas or mix of those identities.

Services are products that include activities, benefits or satisfactions (essentially intangible and do not result in the ownership of anything)

Taken into account one of the first tactics, planning and resources, it is important to make sure that the organization is offering the right product. Product is one of the most important elements in marketing mix because it is not only giving market expressions but also distributing great influence on other elements: place, price, promotion, etc. Diane Canwell agreed that there are needs to be methodical and systematic to build product portfolio either by market research or by brainstorming sessions (1998, 42). It is definitely necessary to design product carefully because it can not only improve customer value but also reduce costs and produce stronger competitive advantage. Poor design can result in lost sales and embarrassment (Kotler and Armstrong 2008, 511). Today companies all know that customers are buying much more than just products and services. Therefore, besides tangible values that customer benefit, there must be intangible values that can increase customers' experiences. This figure below shows how customers really achieve for buying a product after a core benefit.

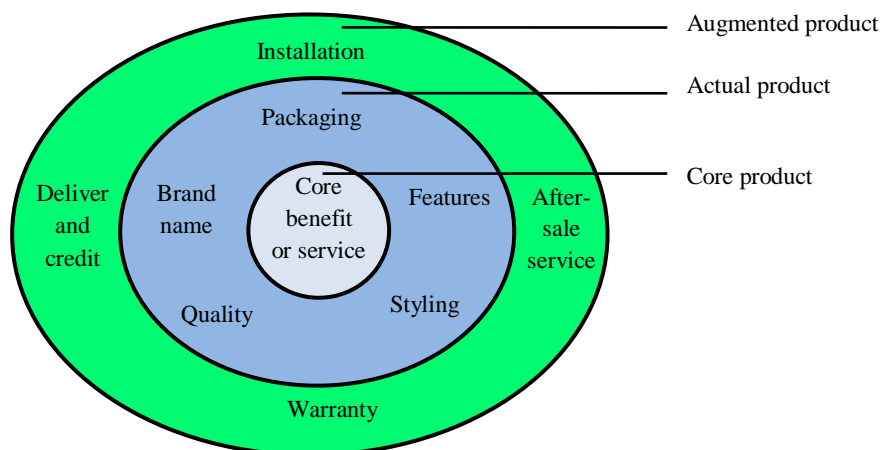


Figure 10: Three levels of product (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 501)

Price

It is important to find out the price determination or setting price.

Setting price is taking consideration of produce profits as well as produce demand. Price is sensitive in a way of exchange value in which customers get in order to pay for it. In fact, if companies set price based on total costs plus profits, it might be reasonable for the firms but it might not satisfied consumers in terms of real values. Therefore, it is necessary to plan all programmes' costs before setting prices. One of the facts is that customers usually think that higher prices bring more quality. Thus cutting prices to match competitors is not always a good tactics. But adding more products'/services' values to support higher prices could be good tactic. Indeed, setting price is always together with pricing objectives whereby marketers can fulfill company's missions. Prices are so easy to change as we can see the markets with full of attractive and promotional prices. And according to seasonal sales or promoting products, adjusting prices can easily make products noticed, increase total sales and empty inventory.

Place

Place, in other words is distribution channel (also called marketing channel) includes functions performed by producers, intermediaries and retailers to distribute products to customers. A well-developed product can take advantage of by agent or functional intermediaries. Example that we have is how successful Macdonald fast-food is by giving franchising contract. Designing a completed distribution channel before sells is needed in order to minimize the costs and make product available to customers as

fast as possible. Thus, besides improving the transportation and logistics, companies need to cope well with other partners in the supply chain channel. Even though intermediaries play an important role during the delivering process, companies need to prepare an alternative way to reach their market. Alternative choices might be influenced by partnership problem, confliction, and competition or from environmental criteria.

Promotion

In the context of marketing mix, promotion or in other words marketing communication mix includes various communication methods to reach target customers. Either by advertising or by sales promotion, marketing communication contains a message to persuade customer to buy products. According to Kotler's concept, there are five separated marketing communication tools, which are supposed to deliver a consistent and positive message.

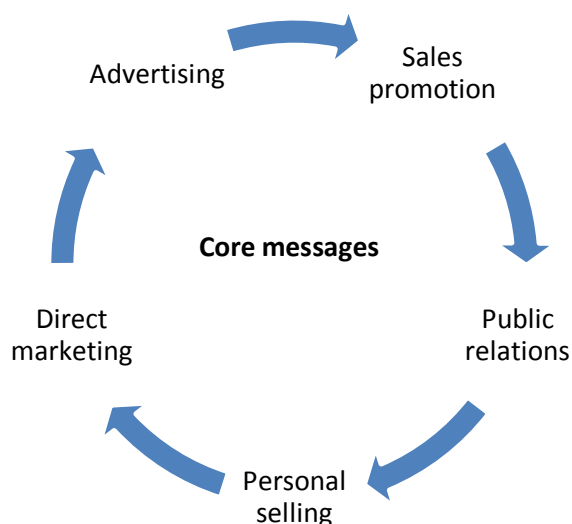


Figure 11: Integrated marketing Communications (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 697)

However, how to make the message effective to receivers requires a well-prepared and focused programme. The message can be designed for specific segment, or for particular individual. It should relate to audience's interest and be able to motivate buying decisions. Finally, even the promotion is carried out by any communicating methods; companies still need to make it work with self-regulation and standard practices (Elizabeth Hill 1998, 301).

People

In the context of extended marketing concept, people are essential element of the marketing mix. Many companies have soon realized that people are golden assets. People are the ones who direct or indirect interact with customers. The more positive employees behave, the better customers will be satisfied with the services. Therefore, recruiting process and training process requires finding out the appropriate people with suitable skills and attitude.

Physical Evidence

Marketing mix extended also introduces the impact of physical evidence. This is the element of the service in which demonstrates the environment of delivered products or services. Physical evidence can be understood simply by appearance or performance in the environment where customers are able to make judgments on the organizations. Physical evidence plays an important role of creating first impression and positioning the service. It has a major impact on customer's buying decision when they feel it comfortable to enter to the context of receiving services. If organizations carefully take care of the physical evidence, it could bring back a lot of opportunities to support companies' images.

Process

Process is the systems and policy used to assist organizations to provide products or services. It includes activities, which are acquired to go through before customers can consume the services. Process means very much about company's performance and customers usually make evaluation based on that performance. In a high-tech environment, customers require more for fast and simple process. To make the process happens more efficiently, organizations must build a logical route for ordering and delivering. The methods applied may vary in many different ways. For instant, firstly it is necessary to make the company's contact person available to reach during the ordering process. Secondly based on technology performance, company can set simple legislations of the orders. Finally is to encourage and focus on people involved to the producing process, make it move more smoothly. In some cases, it is worthy to establish a reminding system. The goal is to cut waiting time, increase customer satisfaction and build a successful number of customer royalties.

2.7 Marketing Implementation

From marketing view, marketing implementation is the section that actions will be carried out in order to follow the marketing strategies. After the marketing objectives have been set, marketing implementation has a duty of picking them up and taking them to actions. Related issues, Walker, Mullins, Boyd and Larreche stated that a business's organizational structure, internal policies, procedures, and resources must fit its chosen strategy or else implementation will fall short (2006, 289). Yet even though marketing strategies have been chosen a numerous competitive advantages, marketers need to arrange and replace by effective implementation. Many managers think that doing things right (implementation) is as important as, or even more important than, doing the right things (strategies) (Kotler, 2008, 158). Still it is more difficult to carry things out than write marketing objectives to document. Therefore, implementing marketing strategies requires the marketing strategies fit with company culture, people, organizational structure and the long-term orientation (mission, vision, core value). Successful marketing implementation is designed to be cohesive, workable, and linkable with different functional levels as well as different internal/external levels of the relationships.

2.8 Budgets and Controls

In order to build a successful picture of marketing performance, marketers need to calculate and spend their budgets with carefully thinking about the financial returns on the expenditure. According to key financial measures such as sales, profits, costs and return on investment, marketers can evaluate the marketing plan and decide the budget progress toward long-term objectives (Wood 2007, 217). However, it is not easy to measure how much can be returned from the investment. The fact is that return on investment is not only in monetary terms, but it is also returned in branding terms. And usually, evaluating the effectiveness of spending marketing budgets is based on standard performance measures, such as returns in monetary terms, or new coming relationships, or adjustments of the marketing strategies, or customer satisfaction index, etc. This figure below shows how cost of marketing investment causes impact on marketing returns and other related components.

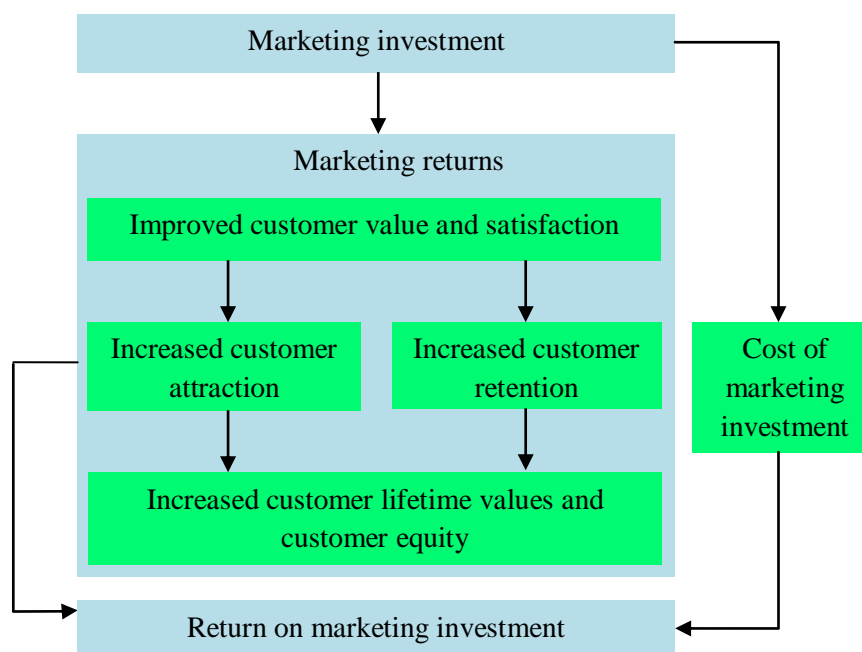


Figure 12: Return on marketing (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 161)

During plan implementation, marketing control plays an important role of setting standards and measurement intervals to gauge marketing progress and making adjustments if needed to achieve the planned performance (Wood 2007, 211). Nevertheless, focusing too much on marketing controls could cause some drawbacks for marketers. For instant in order to follow up the marketing strategies, marketer will set lower short-term sales forecast or even release some standards that are too risky to reach targets. Another drawback in marketing control is that marketers may receive high pressure to reconstruct the business and concentrate on higher results. Kotler introduced two types of marketing controls (operating control and strategic control) together with four steps of the marketing control process (set specific marketing goals – measure its performance – evaluate and compare between expected and actual performance – take corrective actions) (Kotler 2008, 161). Strategic control is used to evaluate performance and programme in related with marketing function, marketing relationships and marketing responsibilities. From Kotler point of view and Marian point of view, operating control involves annual control, financial control and productivity control (processes, activities) (Wood 2007, 216)

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Qualitative research

“We will cover some general writing skills such as identifying who our audience is, and then we will consider skills more specific to qualitative research like balance between describing cases and cross-case analysis” (David Carson 2001, 188). According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter (1997, 15). Indeed, qualitative method includes a variety of empirical information by studying case study, personal experience, interview and general interaction. Qualitative research can provide an understanding based on inquiry process. By that, the researcher can collect and analyze from ‘a complex, holistic images’, words, etc. and this exploration will simply narrow the multiple dimension of an issue and display all of its complexity (John W. 1997, 15). Furthermore, there is strong reason for choosing qualitative research method because the researcher got supports from the company with research database and numbers of coordinators willing to be interviewed. The summary of this research is based very much from answers and suggestions of interviewees. Qualitative research requires good observation as well as ability to capture the individual’s point of view.

Since the thesis writer is working in Finland and the company is based in Vietnam, the best method to collect data and information for the research is used by emails and phone calls. Therefore, qualitative research is the major research method for this subject. There are five interviews, which were conducted by phone calls. Additional information was discussed by emails as well. There is a great amount of useful information was provided by the company based on their sooner and current research (called HELP’s research). Nevertheless, HELP is still on the way of constructed their research, HELP is desired to receive greater information from the customer point of view for their plan. Indeed, the researcher will also give personally developed ideas besides HELP’s research. By that, the research will be able to show diversity perspectives from different point of views.

The research outcome is dedicated to HELP. At the moment, not only team marketing but the whole operation is facing the most challenging time: finish all prerequisites to launch products to the markets. The research therefore is desired to make HELPs services more recognizable and valuable and reliable. Finally, the research result is expected to make a better connection between HELP and other partners in the country.

In the next chapter, the researcher will introduce the data collection process as well as examine the validity and reliability of the research.

3.2 Collection data process

3.2.1 Interview

As mentioned in previous topic, the research was adopted with the qualitative method, which is obtained by following a number of interviews. Building a marketing plan requires crucial information from personal opinions and environmental impacts. A number of questions were designed to in order to find out an ideal marketing plan for HELP. Indeed, the researcher was making efforts to combine the academic theory with the information collected from the respondents. In facts, all the respondents were receiving the questionnaires before interviewing. By that, it is more advantageous to interpret the interaction during interviewing time. Most of the respondents were eager to be interviewed instead of writing the answers. There is a formal questionnaire designed to focus on the research's theme that will be introduce by later appendix. However, some additional questions also had been added to avoid the structured interview, which is too formal and less interesting. Consequently, the researcher was able to collect experienced information and honest recommendation for the theme research.

The interview process took about three weeks from the beginning of June to the end of June 2010. As the beginning, the researcher was going to organize up to ten interviews with people in different department of HELP. However, the thesis advisor recommended to interview key persons who are running the business everyday and able to offer detailed information which are necessary for the theme research. Thus, there were five interviews conducted with key positions of HELP. The researcher took some notes during the phone calls. However, all the information were recorded and exchanged later to word document to make it easier to analyze. The major success during the collection data process is that the researcher was keeping a close contact with all respondents as well as the advisor. Therefore, a lot of additional data had been received; the researcher had more possibility to get in-depth into each opinion. In addition, all respondents are founders or co-founder of HELP; they are determined to build a successful business plan for HELP at the moment. Hence, it is extremely obvious that this research is their faith to look for what else to be considered for the marketing plan so their contribution is more valuable than ever.

To be more effective for the marketing plan, the researcher had received different experience and attitudes from diverse key players; HELP's founder as well as the thesis advisor Mr. Ta Minh Tuan; HELP's business consultant Mr. Ly Truong Chien, the one who called 'the soul of HELP'; Ms. Nguyen Thi Phuong Quyen, general manager; Ms. Tran Tra My, images' sponsor; Mr. Tran Cong Hieu, marketing coordinator. All are living in Ho Chi Minh City, where HELP's target market is located.

Mr. Ta Minh Tuan contributed sufficient general information, which is covered from insight and oversight business as a whole. Still at the young age, Tuan already has four year experience in business life as an entrepreneur. He was the founder of a digital marketing agency IDEE JSC (can be found at <http://ideecorp.com>). IDEE JSC with strong technology will play an important role to build a successful brand for HELP. In addition, Tuan also involved to a construction business as a deputy managing director. Therefore, he possesses potential ability as a manager of HELP.

Mr. Ly Truong Chien is the other business expertise of HELP. He was a former vice president of marketing at Unilever Vietnam. He is chairman of Tri Tri Education Group Corp. He is also the general of Saigon Paper Company, Sapuwa mineral water and taking high level of executives at many companies. With a strong experience and compatible background, Chien's contribution at HELP is the most active one. After the interview with him, the researcher has realized that he is 'the soul of every movement together with HELP'.

Besides Tuan and Chien, there are three other respondents who are young and full of zeal. Such as Ms. Quyen is a senior lecturer at Ho Chi Minh University of Technology. She has experience working for several companies. At the moment, Quyen is a general manager at HELP. She has contributed greatly to HELP's research market and brought back information of high value. On the other hand, Tra My with her role has shown many of the so-called values of HELP services. Tra My is an images' sponsor of HELP. Before joining the company, Tra My has many famous literary works. She loves writing and has a dream of a book event company. She brings many ideas that can contribute to HELP's project. From her energetic living style, an idea of establishing charitable funds had been created by HELP. The fund is for those with disabilities wanting to have normal feet as everyone else. Another expert represented in this research is Mr. Hieu, he is a young person with academic knowledge of doing marketing. He is currently enrolled at the University of Foreign Trade Vietnam. As a marketing coordinator, Hieu has proven essential in learning and creative at work with full of enthusiasm.

All the interviewees had excellent background and interests to dedicate their capacity to HELP business. Therefore, the researcher strongly believes that the data collected is valuable and reasonable for the theme conclusion.

3.2.2 Secondary data

As the research topic is about marketing plan, there are greatly huge references to look for. Therefore, secondary data was mainly collected from related theory books and a part of them from the internet resource.

The theme research was also based on previous researches which have similar studying purpose. Moreover, as mentioned before, HELP's research is another important data for this theme analysis. HELP's research market contains essential data on the analysis of the competition and its market. In general, the research has been prepared carefully almost all needed information.

3.3 Reliability and Validity

In this thesis, the thesis writer was determined to play a neutral role in order to avoid misleading ideas of the interviewees and giving too much personal opinions. Indeed, refers to reliable issue, this thesis has been progressed with considerable time and research methods. And of course, the level of reliability is always along with logical result of the research. Cohen, Manion and Morrison explained that reliability of a research contains characteristics credibility, consistency, neutrality, conformability, dependability, transferability and trustworthiness (2007, 148-149). The research process included the part of taking notes and recording voices, after that data was interpreted into the thesis's language. It is certainly that there are still personal opinions in this qualitative research, but still thesis's objectives are top priority. The most important things is that all comments, attitudes and wishes from the respondents were maintained certainly, which could enhance the level of reliability and validity of the thesis. Last but not least, the clear structure in the questionnaire used in the interviews, which was based on marketing strategy's perspectives definitely clarifies the reliability values.

On the other hand, validity is more about values of the analysis. According to Cook and Campel (1979) defined it as the "best available approximation of truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition and conclusion". In fact, the findings were influenced by the interviews with key persons of HELP. Therefore, the result of this study is not alone but it has a relationship with HELP's perspectives. The studying process is also relevant with majority of theoretical books and reliable references. It is possible to argue that the thesis has comprehensive reasons to prove its validity.

In conclusion, reliability and validity are extremely important in this research. Particularly the research results are desired to make HELP's plan more comprehensive as all respondents expected. Fully covered by building the theoretical part and then the empirical studies, the thesis

writer expects that the outcome of this research can contribute to HELP's marketing plan in at least two first years operating.

4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

It is expected that the findings will first support HELP marketing plan and then it helps to make a connection between HELP and its partner, such as business partners who want to see HELP as a potential partnership or HELP's employees who want to understand better about HELP's services.

As discussed in previous chapter, HELP's mission is to make a breakthrough in the field of human healthcare in Vietnam generally, or Ho Chi Minh City more specifically. The goal is to bring joy and happiness to people, help people to have a healthy life as well as clearly understanding self-health situation. In this chapter, the researcher collected data which is needed for exploiting how HELP can make a good foundation to reach the market. Later, the thesis will provide recommendations for HELP to improve its current marketing plan.

The empirical findings were based on the opinions and suggestions of the respondents. In addition, the thesis will be focused on some issues which are considered as a potential studies for HELP. Firstly, it is expected to clearly explain about the demand in these services, simply called HELP's market opportunity. Secondly, the researcher will bring some results from the marketing mix perspectives. Thirdly, the thesis will give some information discussed through the marketing strategy. And finally, there will be a summary of expectations and suggestions from different point of views.

4.1 Current analysis – Market Opportunity

4.1.1 Healthcare services in Vietnam

According to VnEconomy newspaper released on 2nd April 2009, Vietnamese population is approximately 86.2 millions. Although the population growth rate has declined in recent years, but the annual increase is still about 1 million, which is at 1.2% average growth rate (Duong Ngoc 2009, Vietnam's population through periods). Although it is admitted that Vietnam has a high population density, there is still a huge gap between demand for health services and number of people work in this area. Regarding to HELP's research, people working in this sector is

severely lacking, only 6.2 doctors out of 10.000 inhabitants. According to Chien, HELP's business consultant, he stated that Vietnamese medical services are being patched pressure and overloaded in both terms of quality and quantity. Indeed, it is not only the size of population brings market opportunity for HELP. Hieu, a young marketer, has realized that the Vietnamese economy is growing; people are receiving higher income. Therefore, the demands for health care and special needs are automatically transferred to prevention. This phenomenon creates greater demands and its attention. Yet the terms of market opportunity do not just stop there. Mr. Chien stated that since the level of education increases together with many activities of domestic and foreign insurance companies have been partly increased the sense of prevention.

Even though the demands are high, the distribution of people working in health sector is uneven between regions. It is easily to see the distinct difference of distributing population between urban and rural area. HELP's research concluded that private medical personnel in rural area are about 1/3 compared with urban area. To fulfill by numbers, it is approximately about 21.8 per 100.000 rural inhabitants compared with 64.4 per 100.000 urban inhabitants. This number is definitely confirmed that private healthcare is mainly concentrated in areas with high living standards. And more than ever, this huge gap is needed to be patchy in time.

Moreover, private medical activities are more preferred than public services since public services cannot fulfill the needs of such a big size population. Public services are also facing with medical establishment lack of infrastructure and equipments, especially in rural areas. While private sectors running the business by profits will offer efficiently services, meet better people's demands. People will be cared more and they expect to receive better medical service quality than by public services. In fact, the image of hospitals with overloaded work and poor treatment has made people look to the privates. And as we know, Vietnam is a country where the level of income is still significantly different. Many of people are high-income residents and majority of people are average and low-income residents. Therefore, the needs to use services also vary greatly.

In addition, Chien business consultant, has been working in business field over years, claimed that both quality and quantity of medical services are not always stable and satisfied demands. He agreed that HELP should focus more on prevention instead of going deeply into medical treatment. Such as arrange time for the examination and treatment, as prevention is primary, especially before and after the therapy. Relatively as Chien mentioned, booking service is extremely necessary when this service is not so popular at present. According to HELP's research, there is limit number of clinics have this type of service. However, also very few of them can make the service process well because there is still problem to connect all hospitals and clinics together. In fact, without booking service, patients will get many difficulties in the examination and treatment. It is

usually take a lot of waiting time and it is easily to frustrate with the public services. Moreover, with the geographical factor, when the service facilities distributed unevenly, patients will simultaneously move to large cities, create severe congestion in the provision of adequate services.

From those factors above, it is unsurprising to recognize market opportunity in the country is very high. Some respondents claimed about the healthcare service.

“This is a growing industry and prepare the next **stage of explosive growth**, the level of competition in the sector is currently small, barriers are about mostly legal issues, the sector is considered very good to enter at this time.” (Ta Minh Tuan, 09.6.2010)

“In Vietnam, the health systems are **overlooked**. The health care services for people are not fully meet demands and hospitals are quite often overloaded.” (Tran Tra My, 25.06.2010)

“On national scale, this is the needs of everyone; its markets are likely to **expand** along with economic development.” (Tran Cong Hieu, 28.6.2010)

Nevertheless, not so many insurance companies or social services have been on top of success. Instead of that, many people come to private medical options. The reason is that perhaps people can't afford to buy the insurance or they don't even know whether the medical insurance is truly valuable or not.

Compare to other countries in the area, Tuan admitted that Vietnam's medical market is likely as same as China's market 10 years ago; and respectively as same as Thailand about 15 to 20 years ago, and 20 to 30 years of Singapore before. According to this estimation, Tuan believed that the healthcare services in Vietnam will be explored in the next 3 to 5 years.

4.1.2 Healthcare services in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC)

Ho Chi Minh City is the most populous city of which have more than 7 million inhabitants, accounted for 8.34% of the total population of the country (Wiki, 20.7.2010). The city has 24 districts and 5 of these are designated as rural districts. Ho Chi Minh City is considered as an economic, cultural and educational center of Vietnam. The city has

attracted more investors than anywhere else. According to HELP’s research, population is not the direct factor to increase healthcare market demands but the increase population has a significant impact. It was assumed that the actively increasing number of people in the city every year is a case for studying the market demand.

According to United Nations survey published in 2001, Ho Chi Minh City has an average annual population growth rate at 1.53 from 2000 to 2005. And it is predicted that the annual rate will rise to 2.48 percent during the period 2010-2015. With this rate, it is estimated that there will be a bit less than 6 million people in 2010.

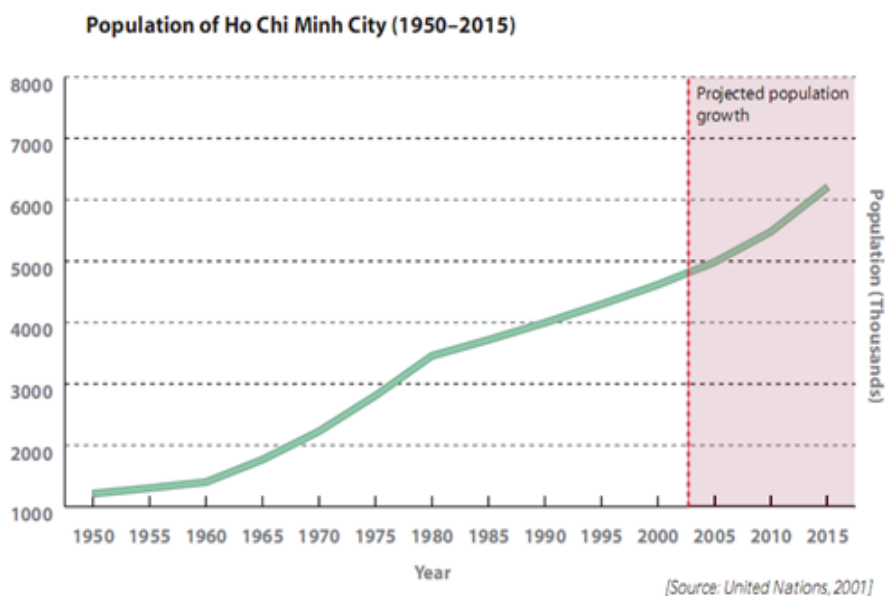


Figure 13: Population of Ho Chi Minh City (1950-2015) (United Nations, 2001)

In fact, there were 7.1 million inhabitants in 2009 (Wiki 20.7.2010). This surprising growth somehow indicates the vast potential healthcare market. Yes Ho Chi Minh City is the case that market opportunity is even more than predictable. Regarding to Quyen, the one who had participated to HELP’s research, she emphasized that the number of people go for medical examination is very high. She mentioned that according to the statistics found, only 5% of these people accounts for 200 to 300 people in the city every day. With this high number, Ho Chi Minh City is definitely a place to start-up healthcare services, demands are on top needed.

Moreover, HELP’s research also noted in 44 establishments involved in the research; majority of them are private investors who provide personal doctors, consulting healthcare package or home visitors. There are only 2 of these have the prevention programme, 10 of these has the personal doctor programme and 14 of them organize having periodic health examinations. Expressed as the following table:

Service name	Quantity (per 44 foundations)	Ratio (%)
Home visiting	10	22.7
Personal/Family doctor	10	22
Consulting package	2	7
Disease Prevention	2	4.5
Periodic health examination	14	31.8
Nursing	1	2.3
Electronic medical records	9	20.5

Table 4: Competitor analysis (HELP’s research 2010)

According to HCMC statistical health department, in 2008, HCMC has 8 general hospitals, 20 specialized hospitals, 10 pharmaceutical companies and 1 center of training medical staffs together with dozens of sanatorium, clinics, preventive medicine centers and medical service in communes. There are 29.668 people work in healthcare sector (Medinet, 2008). In that total number, there are 5.597 doctors and 6.884 nurses. This number change slightly compare with the previous years. Although the city has developed the health care system recently, comparing with the population increasing rate, services are seriously lacking. In the same issue, Quyen also claimed that percentage of people go for health services in and out the city had increased recently. Within year 2008, there were more than 1 million medical diagnosis and treatment. Few thousands doctors and more than 1 million patients is a real big gap in social services.

Besides the boom in population, Tuan also considered the criteria to evaluate the market based on age, gender, income, and behavior and psychological criteria. In fact, due to high population fluctuation, mainly by unexpected moving from rural to urban area, HCMC includes all types of people from different living standards. Although the GDP per capita reached 2.800 US dollars, compared to the country average 1042 US dollars (Wiki 20.07.2010)

4.1.3 HELP services

It may not be necessary to mention HELP’s core values once again here since it had been mentioned in earlier chapter. However, it is likely all the respondents wanted to keep it repeated. HELP launched by several factors expected to bring joy and happiness to people. They are combination of help, care, devotion and openness.

Indeed, after many working in business field and has knowledge of the health sector, Chien was proud to say that in terms of professionalism,

HELP is leading in the area. He claimed that although there are direct or indirect healthcare services run by private clinics or personal doctors, but they are not running seriously and professional on a large scale. Most of the competitors are spontaneous and do not link to each other. Even though their services had been launched before HELP, they could not receive high reputation, professional character and big influence. Therefore, in type of direct confrontation, HELP is more favorable. In long-term practice, HELP tends to focus more on its values, develop a system of high efficiency on a large scale.

Still, Chien added that a good service or product had been successful by its prestige should be made by those who have passion and devote the whole life for it. Indeed, HELP was created by the team of spirit cooperation. He asserted that human element would bring success for HELP. Especially in healthcare sector, elements of goodwill, ability, commitment and endurance are extremely needed. By this issue, Tuan and Hieu also had the same recognition.

“People will be the key success of HELP.” (Ta Minh Tuan, 09.06.2010)

“I believe HELP will be a strong brand by its young human resources and its core values. Most large corporations in the world work toward their core values. And HELP is also following its vision.” (Tran Cong Hieu, 28.06.2010)

In general, life can't exist without healthcare service, either by personal care or public care. Health is gold generally in terms of physical, intellectual and mental capacity. However, most of people do not know anything about their health situation until they go to hospital and check it. Even though medical establishment have been developed, people still demand a lot from this sector. The fact is that thousands people die each year because of unknown disease in their body, or thousands people take sick leaves in the company because of health problems. This time is HELP to go first to this open market. Tuan stated that besides offering the personal doctor services, HELP will also provide nurses for healthcare at home. This service include taking care of pregnant women before and after giving birth, new born babies, persons injured and old people. HELP's nursing staff can also take care of people with disabilities, people after surgery, etc.

Furthermore, all respondents explained that the important thing is how to connect HELP with other hospitals and clinics, create a healthcare network simply and fastest such as booking programme or health consulting package. More about these features will be explained in the next chapter.

From all respondents' perspectives, this figure shows how HELP's service positioning at a competitive market, Ho Chi Minh City.

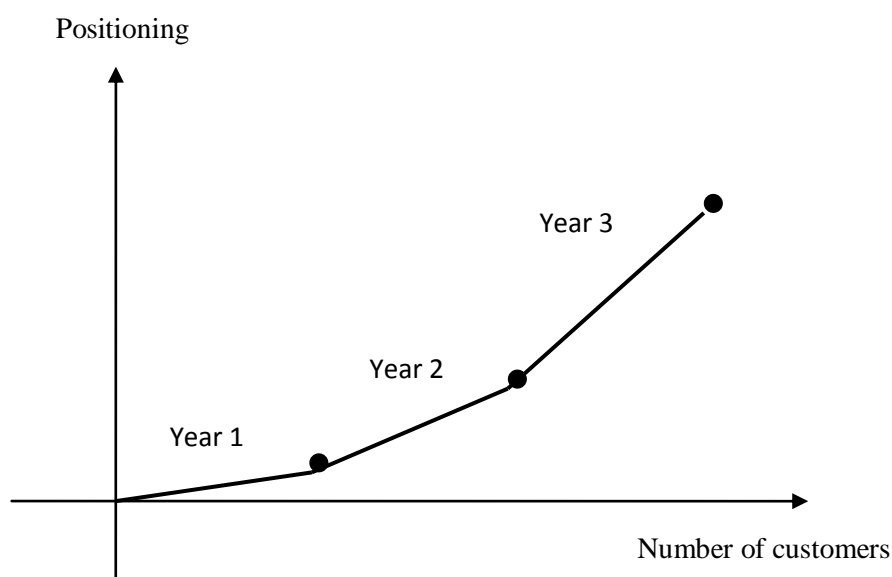


Figure 14: Expectation of HELP position in the market

4.2 Marketing Mix

4.2.1 Product and service

As mentioned earlier, HELP launched together with its diversity of services. Many types of services will be provided in order to fulfill the increasing demand in current healthcare sector. About the products range, Tuan claimed that due to the current situation, HELP will take its first priority to deploy services for individual customer (B2C) and for companies or enterprises (B2B). To use the service, there are 9 steps for customers which are described as the table below:

Step	Name	Description
1	Customer registration	Register via HELP office, Call Center, SMS, Internet 2.0
2	Payment	Cash, prepaid card, bank card
3	Personal Doctor	Delivered or chosen, 24/7
4	Research	Direct consulting, General healthcare checking, Data saved
5	Schedule adjustment	The system adjusts doctors' and customers' schedules. Using

		Booking online, SMS, Call Centre for unscheduled health service
6	Design Health Care Programme	Based on customer's health condition, Health Care Programme is designed with discussion between customers and Doctors.
7	User Account	Via Internet or Call Center, provide information about Health Record, Doctors' schedule, Booking system, or Health Supporting, etc.
8	Implement Service	Update info by SMS, Call Center, Reminder System, etc.
9	Additional Service	Provide medical equipment, Training courses, Exercises Services, Corporate with Insurance Company, etc.

Table 5: 9 steps – Services for individual customers (HELP's research 2010)

According to the summary table, customers do not need to follow all the steps. For instant customers can stop using services at the step 4 where they already receive acceptable examination and treatment. However, next steps are suggested. For instant, designing a life-style programme is very useful for people who have an intensive schedule, or for those who want to prevent from health problems.

Chien also added that HELP will not go deep to expertise such as endoscopy, treatment or surgery. Instead, he emphasized that HELP needs to focus on disease prevention service, examination schedule, nursing, etc. The goal is to make people go examination more frequently, help them to reduce waiting time and be more comfortable and convenient during the visits.

More about the products, Tuan said that when customers need help, they look for a solution. Therefore, the service features are preferred to bring values in both of good facilities and good mental supports. In addition, Tuan recognized that HELP's system is determined to be reached easily as well as HELP will be more able to interact with customers.

Regarding to service contribution, Quyen explained more about the booking programme that HELP will offer. She explained that booking service is new. Even though there are few healthcare services provided in the city, but booking service is likely inactive. She explained that HELP will cover three types of booking: booking examination at the clinics, booking examination at home and booking emergency examination. Yet

services are various but it also requires its efficiency for customers' satisfaction. Talking about booking features and its utilities, Quyen confirmed that booking will be done easily through a call center, SMS or Suggestion Board.

Besides the strengths, there are always weaknesses. Tra My, who works as a doctor for full team's spirits, admitted that although HELP goes for profession and high accuracy, HELP may lack of talent group of doctors who devotes for this social services. She claimed that the current operating team does not hold persons working in the medical sector. Tra My realized that this issue is quite sensitive since one hand HELP must find both talented and virtuous doctors; on the other hand, HELP must transform people trust into health sector in Vietnam. In contrast, Tuan believed that HELP will attract talents since the business was created by a great idea that can convince people. He added that HELP has good connection with Mai Duc hospital as well as 5 whole-hearted doctors. To convince his opinion, Tuan noticed that HELP has already linked with some reliable business associations provide Yoga and meditation such as Trai Tim Vang (Golden Heart), Yoga Secret Club and Viet Guys SMS agencies (reminder system). Tuan strongly believed that when the company works for the community, the environment and for human life; when all is done and people live a better life; HELP will be more trustful and able to satisfy its entire people.

This issue will be explained more details in the chapter of marketing communication and development. However, this figure below will shortly summarize HELP's services regarding to all respondents' expectation during the preparing process:

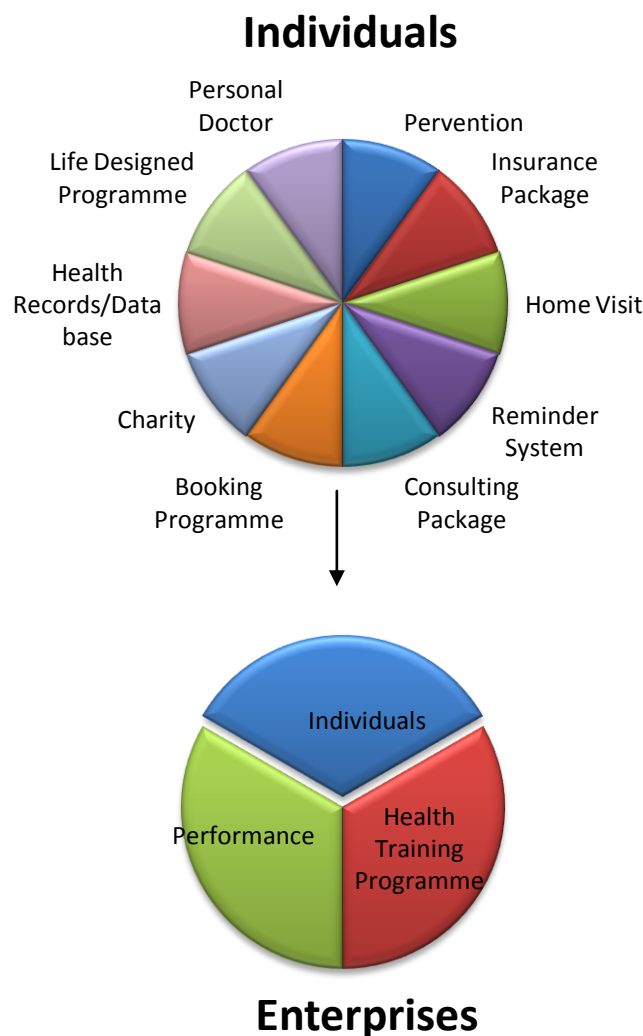


Figure 15: Types of Services for Individuals and Enterprises

4.2.2 Price

Pricing strategy is an important and sensitive step. And setting price based on company fixed cost and variable cost is not easily since it might not satisfy customers. In this case, Tuan claimed that prices are determined according to customers' criteria such as age, income, loyal customers. He added that there are set prices for healthcare services on the current market, thus HELP needs to provide acceptable prices. Indeed Tuan emphasized that price strategy is not difficult since HELP had counted the possible return on the market. He added that HELP's market survey found out the HCMC market increased 30% from the previous year. And as mentioned earlier, there are about ten clinics running the similar services

and cover 1.2 million people. The number is too small to cover such a large market. In addition, Chien emphasized that at the beginning, the team may not be professional enough to carry out sale duties. However, he was confident on sales returns.

“I can see us to be called basically a temporary open-up business. We offer services as social needs and I believe in the principles that when we meet social needs, we must have returns.” (Ly Truong Chien, 16.6.2010).

Still, Chien explained that reasonable prices should come along with suitable package design. Although healthcare services do not require luxury packages or special packages due to unfair advantages. However, payment methods should be implemented clearly and simple. He suggested that HELP should have instant payment period or pay per year or purchase HELP’s card. In details, Tuan also confirmed that as HELP is now focus on individual customer, he would recommend customer purchase period package rather than buy the service by visiting times. In fact, this package would offer more benefits for customers since they have health check more regularly and also receive a cheaper price.

In addition, Tuan noticed that HELP’s cards are also perfect solution in term of payment.

“HELP healthcare services are now easy like buy a cup of Starbucks coffee or buy a book on Amazon. Regarding to payment solutions, HELP has two types of payment. The first one is scratch card, like using prepaid phone card. And the second one is membership card. HELP will link up with the banks.” (Ta Minh Tuan, 09.6.2010)

Either using prepaid card or ATM membership card, these new features indeed will raise customer attention by its convenient and simple utilities. Moreover, Quyen stated that depending on the costs of connecting with these services, HELP will consider in the first year operation which one is the most costly efficiency to launch.

4.2.3 Promotion

Regarding to marketing communication mix, since HELP is not selling its products yet, all respondents expected to increase HELP’s brand awareness. In fact, many ideas had been brought up to promote the services; all perspectives were beyond to the core values of HELP.

From Tuan's explanation, HELP advantages by its name: HELP. In fact, he added, HELP is a verb; therefore it is rarely used to name a brand. Furthermore, Tuan once again emphasized that names a brand is necessary to spread its attention. Especially in social services, HELP reflects its core value to 'help' people whenever people need assistance. In addition, it was argued that HELP brand recognition would be supported with different marketing channels. The traditional marketing channels will be implemented for instant newspapers, television, radio or events. It is believed that those traditional methods are somehow still keeping its instant effects as an old fashion. Nevertheless, as marketing communication mix has been improved rapidly, HELP is unsurprisingly supported by digital marketing channels such as IDEE JSC, Vietguys JSC (How does your brand talk to your customers). Indeed, Tra My noticed that all to do with promotion is to build credibility. She said that healthcare services have been losing its images since patients have to deal uncomfortably with the services. Regarding to this problem, she emphasized on the affects by words of mouth. Truly for a populous society, words of mouth have an unpredictable affects. And this possibility might bring a chance to expand the market to other neighbor provinces besides HCMC. She added that it is important to guarantee HELP's image. Another respondent also agreed how words of mouth are worthy.

"The best marketers for the brand are our customers." (Nguyen Thi Phuong Quyen, 30.06.2010)

This is also the fastest way to receive brand's credibility and approach the market. Another possibility to increase brand awareness, according to Tra My, is to organize events where HELP can be invited. Tra My stated that there are many successful young person's willing to share experience and a lot of young people want to have opportunities to be entrepreneurs in the city. Thus, she is developing a talk show and invites HELP's representatives as a guest. The goal is to create successful HELP's reputation according all respondents' expectation. Moreover, Quyen still added that the marketing team is in process of developing brand awareness through Internet 2.0.

4.2.4 Place

It was likely that all respondents agreed that in the first year, HELP will launch its services in the target city, HCMC. Although from all expectation, HELP will soon able to expand the markets. More about distribution channel, it is admitted that HELP will have a flexible staff

where it mainly serve for individual customers. And for good preparation, it was added that with the booking systems, it is definitely possible to arrange well the delivering process. In addition, Tuan added that Call Center and the Website are two simple channels to access. Nevertheless, all respondents believed that customers can easily reach HELP's services by buying scratch cards which are distributed at points selling phone cards and pharmacy shops.

4.2.5 People

While it is still very intensive for a small team to make everything done during the preparation period, all respondents conceived that HELP gathers people with full of zeal. As Chien already mentioned, HELP has people that are ready to learn and experience. In addition, he added that although a young group may find it difficult to deal with business they had not been experienced much, however it would be a big chance for them to overcome. As Tra My also admitted that people will be a key success, she claimed that HELP's leader, Tuan, had divided the work specifically. The factor leading to success is that everyone is a good listener and willing to help each other.

“We have staffs that have core values fit with the culture of the company, they must really fight for what they believe, that bring pleasure and happiness to people. Work environment must be robust, boosting innovation, and helping each employee to develop them continuously.”
(Ta Minh Tuan, 09.6.2010)

Nevertheless, the biggest problem that some respondents had mentioned is not the internal staff but the external staff. It is about ethical issue. More details, it was worried that HELP might get difficult in managing personal doctors or nurses who can easily connect with the customers without going through HELP's system. In fact, Tuan confirmed that HELP will have solutions for this problem. For young doctors and nurses, since they do not have yet prestige and reputation, Tuan believed that HELP's cooperation can freely market them. By that, HELP can keep this relation tightly since most of these partners will stay to continuously improve their professional skills and reputation. For other with full experience and high skills, Tuan mentioned that HELP will make agreement with them as well as design a system that will be benefited for both customers and doctors/service providers. On the other hand, Tra My claimed that HELP devotes its values for the community. Therefore, who joins HELP should be able to obtain both his talent and moral at work.

4.3 Competitor analysis

To shortly summarize, besides booking systems and consulting packages, HELP provides not only the personal doctors but also nursing staff. Indeed, it might be reasonable to conclude that HELP's competitors are hospitals, clinics and other similar services. Nevertheless, it is likely inexactly 100% since HELP's services obtaining different operating methods. HELP can provide direct services, but HELP can also provide indirect services through booking systems. In this case, HELP can be a center of healthcare services or in other words, it is called HELP Center. And from this point of view, it is possible to assume that HELP might not have any competitors, at least at HCMC market.

On the other hand, when consider HELP with other direct competitors, HELP's research stated that there are about 15 to 20 hospitals and clinics offer the same services in HCMC. Related to this issue, it was said that medical services at home have been introduced quite popular recently. However, as mentioned earlier, the services offered are launched by very few organizations that it still not fulfilling yet the potential market, either in HCMC or in the country. HELP's research also stated that these establishments do not operate the services under a system or any certain management but by direct contacting between customers and the medical staff. This easily led to mismatch between customers and the services providers, how to find out each other. In fact, HELP is more freely to solve this problem by creating a management system, which is capable of connecting customers with healthcare providers.

Furthermore, HELP's research provided that those direct competitors are not distributed equally in the city but most of them are located in the medium and high-income residential areas. Yet, it is accepted that some clinics and hospitals are equipped with modern facilities have high-skilled doctors.

According to HELP's research and the internet sources, this table below will shortly summarize the comparison between HELP's services and other clinics in HCMC:

Hospital/ Clinic	H E L P	Viet Gia	Thanh Cong	My A	An Khang	FV	Vu Anh	Hoan My	Y Duoc	Viet- care
Well- equipped		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
High-skill Doctors	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Foreign Doctors				X		X	X		X	
Nursing	X	X				X	X		X	
Charity	X		X			X	X			X
Website	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X
Specialist			X			X	X	X	X	
Home Doctor	X	X	X	X	X			X		X
Enterprise consultant	X	X	X			X	X	X		
Online Health Service	X	X		X						
Training Course							X		X	
Location	P N	Dist 1	Tan Binh Dist.	Tan Binh Dist.	Dist 1	Dist 7	Tan Binh Dist.	Dist 3	Dist 5	Dist 1, Go Vap, Tan Binh, Tan Phu

Table 6: Compare HELP and other competitors' services

4.4 Organizational Functions

With the current staff of around 20 people considered as HELP core persons, HELP is flexibly organized according to projects and job rotation. Tuan emphasized the current leading team are quite small therefore it is necessary to rotate the jobs so that one staff can undertake more work. Still it might be reasonable for a young team has a possibility to face challenges and learn more experience to manage a group by their talents and skills. Rotation job will be an opportunity to learn from each other and create solidarity in the company. In fact, the element people and working for people has created a deep passion for job orientation. Related to this issue, Tra My repeated that HELP is organized and lead well by clear and specific job division.

“Tuan, current team leader, knows how to arouse people potential he is working with. The great thing is that he never imposes his own thinking on others. He is definitely a good listener.” (Tran Tra My, 25.06.2010)

Besides, Quyen added that good leading skills will bring success back. She emphasized even though HELP is lead by a small team, but it is supported by many consultants and sponsors.

“Tuan is very good at connecting people together even though they have not known each other before. When HELP has any consultant, not only Tuan takes the advice alone but the whole team will have chance to discuss with that person.” (Nguyen Thi Phuong Quyen, 30.06.2010)

Discuss about leading skills, two other also highly evaluated that HELP is lead properly. Chien, business consultant, mentioned that leading a team by a young person with full of passion and good personality is a solid basic for HELP. Nevertheless, Chien repeated that HELP is still a very new concept. Hence, it might take time and HELP’s staff needs to have strong will and patience.

Discuss again about the organizational functions, Tuan explained that HELP has four major functional departments at the moment. They are included sales department, operation department, human resources department and health services department. Each department is divided into smaller groups and each group is responsible to report to the general manager. Regarding to all respondents’ expectation and Tuan’s explanation, this figure below somehow summarizes HELP’s organizational functions

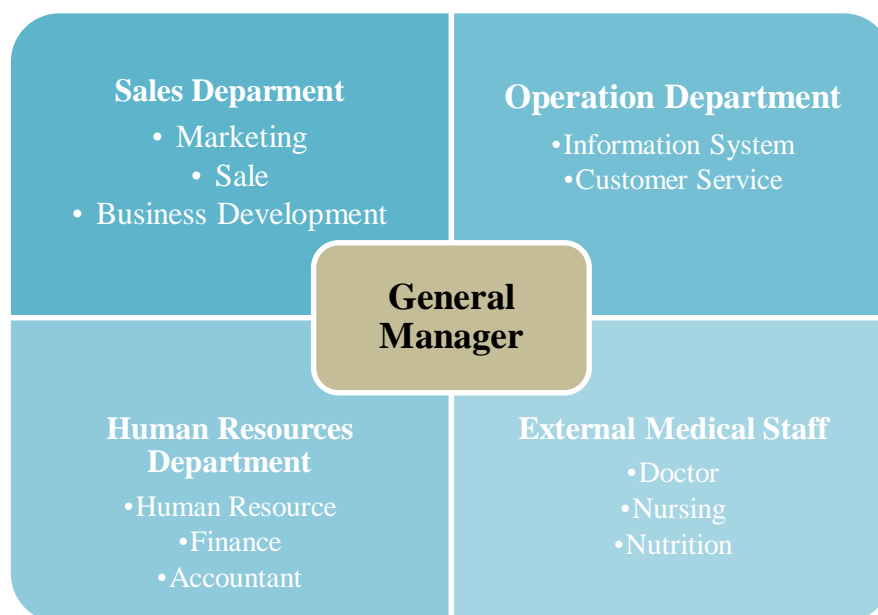


Figure 16: HELP organizational function

Besides the internal staff that has been introduced, HELP is also advantages by many connections with sponsors and consultants who are considered as HELP's strengths. These will be shortly described in the following table.

Training/Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tri Tri Corp •Phat Thien Corp
Gymnastism & Sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Khoi Viet School •Mr.Vong - President of Federation of Gymnastism and Sport HCMC, Khoi Viet School Principal
Events, Seminar, Charity Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mr. Le Trung Hai - "Green Dreams" Leader
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education-city Newspaper •VTM
Confederation of Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mr.Ly Truong Chien - Consultant
Image Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Tran Tra My
SMS Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Vietguys JSC
Digital Marketing Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •IDEE JSC
Doctor Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Ms.Loan: introduces Mr.Son- Dicteror of An Binh Hospital •Ms.Tue: introduces Doctor Luong Le Hoang, Doctor Do Hong Ngoc, network with doctors, monks (mediation) , Dong A Bank
Investor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •High-tech Incubator
Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Mr.Quoc Hung- Business Consultant •Mr.Nguyen Phan Tuan Anh - Marketing Consultant •Mr.Van Duc Tai - Technical Consultant •Mr.Tran Van Tho - Law Consultant •Mr.Xoay -Law Consultant

Figure 17: List of sponsors/ consultant (name - functions) (HELP’s Material)

Last but not least, HELP has prepared for a highly strict schedule from the end of 2009 until now. The tight schedule does not mean that HELP has a short time of preparation but it ensures that HELP has been covering each step carefully and reliably solid. Moreover, HELP has been successfully in the results of market research. It was possible to argue that HELP has been planning well for the human resources, which brings back the core values of its services: people.

4.5 Marketing communication

This topic was fully covered in previous the chapter of marketing mix. Therefore, in this chapter, the researcher will shortly introduce the marketing communication towards the brand awareness. This summarized table below will briefly display the main channels and marketing tools that HELP uses to promote its images. The table does not contain fully methods that will be implemented by HELP or not. However regarding to relevant marketing theory, the marketing communication portfolio is intensively needed to increase the company reputation and credibility. Especially marketing communication is expected to bring trust into healthcare sector in Vietnam as well as open-up a new chapter of doctor's ethics.

Marketing Communication Options	Magazine	Charitable activities
	Billboard	Press release
	Newsletter	Video/photo
	Website	Forum
	Endorsement	Contest
	News conference	Presentation
	Poster	Interview
	Talk-show	Training programme
	Exercise/Sport Club	TV/Radio
	Public Relation	Sponsorship
	SMS marketing	Email marketing
	Online PR	Sales promotion
Distribution Channels	HELP Office Retail Shop Home Visit Partner	

Table 7: Recommended marketing communication options

4.6 Prospect of HELP services in the near future

Since HELP's services are not yet introduced into the markets, the prospect of HELP healthcare services were mainly based on respondents' opinions and comments. Furthermore, as HELP is now focusing its business in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), the chapter will explain the prospects mostly related to this target market. Nevertheless, SWOT analysis will be introduced in order to help the readers easily recognize the strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities and threats. In fact, the writer intended to make a form listed all the ideas that HELP can discuss perfect them.

4.6.1 Strengths

During the research process and the interviews, it was recognize that HELP is strongly created by a young and passionate team. Although it may be reasonable to argue that experienced people will have better performance rather than young passionate team, however the appropriate thing that HELP has been possessed is that HELP is gathering a volunteering team who are willing to work for the community. And the factor is definitely highly considered as golden asset: people. Related to the young operating team, HELP is more than ever lead properly by a young entrepreneur who has many years in business as well as his large relationships. Leading skills are one of the key factors to prove that HELP is whether going the right way or not. Moreover, the leader is also living in a family, which has the traditional devotion to the society. This is somehow suited HELP's core values.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, HELP in stages of reforming the business had been covered by the rotation jobs, which could bring more advantages for HELP's current staff. In other words, it was a big opportunities for everyone to learn and share from each other. In addition, the rotation job brings more managing skills as well as unites the environment so that people can work together.

Nevertheless, HELP is a new concept, new business but it is supported by perfect sponsors and consultants. As Tuan mentioned, HELP is not covered every single concepts of its business till the end, but at the same time, HELP has already connected to other business partners. Moreover, as it is known that in medical field, it is necessary to deal with legislative and legal issues, which are required experts from this field. From this problem, Tuan strongly confirmed that HELP got supports from lawyers and legal advisers that HELP can be more able to build its credibility.

Regarding to the strengths of HELP, it is unsurprising to mention the e-marketing affects. In fact, HELP has a close relationship with IDEE JSC (the digital marketing company) and Vietguys JSC (the SMS Agency-

How does your Brand talks to your customers). These two companies with several years operated will make HELP to be more visible and recognizable.

On the other hand, culture is one of the factors that should be discussed as strength for HELP. According to Tuan, words of mouth are more efficient than any marketing tools. Indeed, the Vietnamese culture together with the thickly populated area has put much influence on each business brand. From respondents' perspectives, HELP is working towards its values to make people become more comfortable using its services. Therefore, if HELP could promote its good images, words of mouth is more valuable than ever. However, culture is a factor that HELP needs to study carefully before launching the services. It is also considered as threat as well.

Moreover, it was understood that HELP is more flexible and creative than other competitors because of its new concepts in healthcare area. In fact, HELP offers diversity of services that fully meet the demands (e.g. booking systems, life-design programme, personal healthcare data records, enterprises connection plus performance index, home nursing, etc.). The service offered is likely open up a new page in medical sector. Besides, it was discussed that prices are compatible and reasonable thus each customer can easily afford. In addition, related to products features, it was discussed that customers will find it easier to reach HELP and save time.

4.6.2 Weaknesses

As discussed in previous chapter, HELP is currently running by a young team, which does not possess fully skills and expertise to cope with business environment. Moreover, the leading team is difficult in experience with medical field because none of them is specifically working in this firm. Nevertheless, this problem can be solved in the near future when HELP organizes training sessions and continuing education more frequently to improve needed skills (e.g. sales skills, managing skills, legal knowledge, relevant medical issues, etc.)

Regarding to Tuan, it's likely that HELP will expense money on well-equipped facilities for medical treatment. Furthermore, the expenses will be used for purchasing proper systems such as used for booking, health data records, etc. By that, the small budgets may not be possible to carry out a good business performance. HELP in this case needs to find out capital supports which could help HELP to stay stable in the first years.

Furthermore, brand awareness is the controversial discussion since HELP might take a lot of time to build successful reliability and credibility. In fact, medical system carries many sensitive issues in many aspects; for instant ethical issue is one of the most considerable problems because in the bad sides, it could easily break the business's credibility.

During the discussion, each single respondent repeated that HELP may face with the risk of lacking professional staff, especially high-skilled doctors and nurses. At the moment, HELP already connected with 5 doctors with passion and skills. However, to fulfill needs for a large market, professional staff is still missing.

4.6.3 Opportunities

It was discussed that HELP has a potential market growth indeed. This conclusion is identified by HELP's research market. It is expected that healthcare services is booming in the next 3 to 3 years. In this case, HELP has such as good opportunity to go earlier in this sector. Moreover, it was proved by the population rate growth rapidly. Among the population categories, there is more than 10 percent holding by older group. Therefore, nursing services will be highly demanded. Besides the population growth, healthcare service is more necessary when the economy is currently developed. People have more possibility to afford these services than before. Furthermore, the intensive living life has increased the number of diseases that it is encouraged to use prevention methods instead of treatment. In addition, it is still lacking of service provider in which personal doctor is a case.

Again, HELP has its competitive advantages by located in HCMC, the central of service demands. The positive location would be a great opportunity to enlarge the market to any nearby location.

Last but not least, another possibility is that HELP is focusing on 'communication solution', aims to create a 'green life'. This concepts would be worthy for HELP relationships. It was expected that many talents would be willing to devote for the community.

4.6.4 Threats

According to Chien, HELP may risk of unfair competition in macro policy level. Of course, the terms of business activities and health care are quite separated and inadequate. Therefore, when HELP mixes these two types, it is hard to prevent unforeseen risks. Yet competitors can easily copy HELP's business model.

Related to the threats, Quyen also mentioned that HELP could face with the quality of intelligence based on the commitment of doctors, nurses who are considered as center recourses of HELP. Tuan added that HELP may get risk to cooperate with the private and general network.

Still, the income of people in Vietnam is still low that many people find it difficult to look for a personal physician. This problem leads to low

awareness of personal health care. Thus, thousands of workers do not have proper treatment in health protection.

Besides, Tuan added that since HELP offers the health data record, it is risk to secure all health profile of customers safely because the data can be lost. Nevertheless, Tuan confirmed that the health care staff can easily go privately with the customers if HELP does not have proper management systems. Customers can be provided separately services for cheaper prices.

Considering as an opportunity, but a big number of customers from the beginning 3 to 5 years operating is also considered as a threat. It is best advices that HELP should design a programme for loyal customer and target on a certain number of customers where HELP is capable taking care of. Otherwise the work is overloaded and HELP may lack of professional staff to conduct the business performance.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>STRENGTHS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young/Passionate People - Leading skill - Rotation job - Sponsor/Consultant - E-marketing - Culture of word-of-mouth - Creative services - Competitive price - Utility 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>WEAKNESSES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of experience - Lack of skills/ expertise - Capital support - Brand awareness - Inadequate professional staff - Mistake in medical treatment
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>THREATS</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unfair competition - Commitment of health care staff - Low awareness of personal health care - Overloaded 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>OPPORTUNITIES</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential market growth + Aging problem + High population growth rate + Economic development + Support policies by government + Lack of personal doctor services - Location - Marketing communication supports

Table 18: SWOT analysis

4.7 Summary of empirical findings

It was mentioned at the beginning of the research that the purpose of this research is to find out a comprehensive marketing plan for HELP in theory. In the empirical part, the researcher was able to investigate some factors that mostly mentioned and considered as a solid foundation for the business. In fact, the researcher had figured out the elements influenced by directly discussing in macro and micro environmental factors. Besides all respondents' perspectives and knowledge, this process was also supported by the earlier company's research (called HELP's research). In addition, the researcher had pointed out findings in the marketing mix which is clearly explained what HELP is really doing since the business idea is relevant to both business activities and medical sector. Furthermore, there was a chance to indentify HELP's competitors as well as describe the business activities towards the core values of HELP. The competitor analyze is kind of short analyze due to the fact that it was implemented the qualitative research method. However, there is general information that sufficient to use for SWOT analyses SWOT analyses identify many different aspects which are included internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats. . In other words SWOT analyze was presented as prospect for HELP in the near future.

Nevertheless, there are several issues related to the marketing plan that have not discussed yet (e.g. financial planning, budget). In addition, the qualitative method also received some difficulties during the interviewing process. For instant there was limitation about timing interviews, language interpretation problem, etc.

The empirical findings could be used for HELPers, for any current and new employees want to revise and explore the basic values of HELP business. On the other hand, the empirical findings would be useful for HELP to look for cooperation, which is considered as business partners or capital ventures. Especially when presented, the text can demonstrate values itself.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation is based on respondents' comments and suggestions together with the researcher's ideas. In this part, the recommendations will focus on the product policy and development. After that, it is partly discussed about marketing budget and controls which were not mentioned details in previous chapter. Then the researcher will provide some suggestions on the company organizational structures. Finally, the research will introduce some marketing tools, which are needed in the company's marketing communication.

5.1 Products policy and development

From Chien's point of view, HELP is a result of completed goals and strategies. The process was not completed immediately but it was a result of long-term establishment. Therefore, it was recommended that HELP should not implement all starting goals during the reforming process. Chien explained that HELP is being competitively advantageous since it can launch various services. However, the intensive process could lead to overworking problem. Indeed, Chien recommended that HELP should work more specific on each target. And at the same time, it should be able to create interoperability of functions such as making links within and outside the company. Furthermore, it was suggested to point out which is the power of each function that the results could bring back after the integration.

Regarding to the products policy, due to the fact that people in the country still have low income in average, it is challenged to keep the price reasonable for the majority of people. However, to be successful towards the core values, HELP can really help to adapt the environment. Therefore, it is suggested that besides luxury packages and normal packages for high and average income group, HELP should also enable its healthcare services to lower income group.

In addition, since various services offered are considered as strength of HELP, it was suggested that HELP can enrich the features of these services. The suggestion stated that for instant when HELP launches the consulting packages by scratch cards, these packages can specifically design for travelers as well. It was argue that these HELP's cards can be used easily anywhere that the area is covered. It is recommended to launch the services in other languages as well since the tourists and foreign investors are coming more and more, especially in HCMC. The two languages suggested are English and Chinese since there are a great number of people speaking these two languages in the city. It was mentioned that when the foreigners need medical helps, they may find it difficult to get in hospitals because the hospitals or clinics can be overloaded or limited with speaking foreign languages. The services should be available 24/24 hours a day.

Furthermore, it was discussed that HELP should well prepare for risks, which are the consequences of medical mistakes. It is not only HELP but also the medical physicians should be responsible for the risks.

Finally, from all respondents' comments, it is preferred to expand nursing services rather than implement complicated medical treatment. Because from the environmental analyze, the target markets are facing with aging issues, more than 10% of the population are old people. In fact, product selection is partly depending on age category. Therefore, HELP should

study more about the environmental factor in order to launch proper services.

5.2 Budgets and controls

Although from several respondents' calculation and prediction, HELP could be able to receive capital return with the first year. Nevertheless, HELP has to cover its capital in four important categories: infrastructure costs, marketing costs, management costs and operation costs (medical staff). According to Tuan, HELP will expense most for the facilities; however, from expectation, HELP will earn profit from the second year. Regarding to this issue, it is recommended that HELP should plan its budget not only for the first year, but also for the second year and third year. The fact is that expectation and estimation will not be exact 100%. Besides the primary budget, secondary budget is necessary to settle unexpected matter.

On the other hand, it was claimed that invest in health care sector is needed to invest in timing as well. The brand is developed when the time is compressed and shortened. Nevertheless, the biggest investment should be people and that is the key of success.

According to the market analyze in previous chapter, healthcare services will be booming in the next 3 to 5 years. Therefore it might be correct to estimate that the healthcare sector will be changing significantly. Competitors thus will increase rapidly and the market is certainly split. It is recommended that as the same time developing the business, HELP should watch out the competing matter since competitors can easily copy the business model. Moreover, HELP should make a plan of competitive prices to adopt suitably with the environment.

5.3 Organizational structure and development

According to Chien, it may take a lot of time for HELP to reach its final destination. In other words, HELP is believed that success will come after each single step, temporarily called short-term adoption to reach the long-term goal. In fact, Chien stated that in the beginning of forming HELP, he expected that HELP was functioning likely as a club where people can joy, care and share. Nevertheless, he explained that from a simple club, when it could attract enough people to participate, its activities are more professional and strategies established. Today HELP is an organization, a business organization with specific functions.

As mentioned earlier, people are the key of success. HELP has a team who are young, active and working hard. For the long-term plan and particular strategies, it would be useful to improve the knowledge for specific goals

(e.g. improve the sale skills, marketing skills, etc.) The training programme, which is organized periodic, is highly recommended. Moreover, regarding to the health care sector, HELP could promote its image by cooperating with some international programme. By that, HELP's medical staff has more opportunities to improve the skills. The international corporation can be exchange doctors programme, operating programme or treatment methods.

5.4 Marketing tools

Beside several marketing tools that had been introduced in previous chapter, HELP should pay attention more on key customers. In fact, it is estimated that one loyal customer can reference to at least 3 other customers in her/his family or friends. The brand awareness will be recognized fast and effectively when HELP adjusts several customer care programme, especially for loyal customers. HELP can personalized these groups and make a list of loyal customers to email or inform them any additional services

As mentioned, word of mouth is one of the most efficient marketing tools that could enhance the business's images rapidly. Especially today, some social networks such as Hi5, Facebook, MySpace, Blogs and Twitter have attracted million users. Indeed, these social networks are as easy to access as it seems cost nothing.

Besides, it was recommended that video marketing is also one of the most advantageous marketing tools because of its visibility. This media together with the traditional social media such as magazines, posters or flyers can easily deliver a message to customers.

In addition, beside the talk-show that HELP is currently organizing, some other programme contain humanitarian values such as organizing sporty activities, yoga club, health advice programme, medical with doctors.

Furthermore, philanthropy activity is also one of the desired programme of HELP. In fact, many poor patients still need financial supports for the medical services and thousands of victims after the war and disabilities have difficult life. Therefore, besides setting up a separate charitable fund, HELP can increase the value of humanitarian services by sponsoring charitable funds.

6 CONCLUSION

Since it was determined to bring a comprehensive marketing plan for HELP the first operating year, the research was collected data from theoretical framework and variety of perspectives from 5 respondents.

In fact, the marketing plan was presented as a whole for any further revision. It was expected to present a solid information background based on business concepts in general. Later on the empirical findings, the researcher had pointed out the importance of market opportunities in which the information was mentioned mostly. In addition, the marketing mix was analyzed by introducing 4Ps plus one key factor: people as the fifth P. The marketing mix extended had pointed out the importance of people which is demonstrated the core value of HELP “people work for the community to bring joy and happiness”. Moreover, the competitor analyze was conducted through HELP’s research and different preferences from the respondents. As a result, it was proved that by offering creative product’s intelligence, HELP has its competitive advantages while others are still lacking of. It was found out that the personal doctor service and nursing services are inadequate in the society. Nevertheless, the SWOT analysis had generally identified the external strengths and weaknesses as well as internal opportunities and threats. It was a result of many comments and acknowledgement that all respondents had given.

Besides, even though the number of interviewees was limited, the fact is that all respondents are undertaken for key positions at HELP. They are the ones who understand the business concepts certainly. Therefore, the recommendations were demonstrated the most desired expectation toward the company’s success.

In addition, the result during the research process; which is most concerned discussible issues in the marketing plan; has been brought positive messages. Due to different answers from different business departments, it was proved that HELP has a certain background to go further in business life.

Nevertheless, regarding to the theoretical framework, there are still many discussible points that had not been presented in the empirical findings. The first obstacle is due to the limitation of resources; the research market was not conducted by the researcher. Therefore, the researcher analyzed from respondents’ understanding, which is somehow unable to explain in details. Secondly, there is obstacle in exchanging different languages. This problem could reduce the multiform aspects of the research. However, the

difficulties mentioned are useful for further research in the near future, when HELP is looking for another marketing plan after the first operating period.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

to answer the research question: "How to develop a successful marketing plan for HELP"

MARKET

1. What are potential markets of HELP?
 - How does HELP define the potential segment/market?
 - How accessible are these segments?
 - How can HELP reach the target market?
 - In terms of health care services, how has the industry developed recently and in the coming future?
 - Is there any similar service in the target market?
 - Are there any challenges from economics, political or social impacts?

PRODUCTS

2. What makes us believe HELP as a strong brand?
3. As HELP now focus on individual customers and organizations, is there any special feature or product flexible for normal and luxury customers? Which one do you consider as key customers: Individuals or Organizations?
4. What marketing channels we use to support the brand image now?
5. What do you prefer/suggest?
(advertising, public promotion, event, personal selling)
6. Is it difficult to provide high technology to reach target market when a lot of people don't get familiar with high tech system?

PRICING

7. How does HELP determine the price policy?

ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTION

8. How is HELP organised?
9. How is HELP lead?
10. Does Personal Doctor Programme risk lacking professional doctors?
11. How about distribution channels?

ENVIRONMENT

12. How can HELP control factors such as its relationship with its target customers?
13. What do you expect from the social behavior when they hear about HELP's service?
14. How people interests?
15. What action should HELP do to make changes in its environment in order to increase the market strengths?
For instants: set price/package, run a promotion campaign, advertising, etc.

MARKETING RESEARCH

16. Due to the need of market research, which of marketing research methods would you prefer to use to collect facts and figures for HELP?
 - Quantitative research (questionairs to make assumptions from a group)
 - Qualitative(interviews to draw a conclusion, answer "How and Why")

RECOMMENDATION

17. YOU THINK WHAT WILL BE THE KEY SUCCESS OF HELP?
18. How do you see the future of HELP in Vietnam?
 - Opportunities
 - Threats
 - Crucial factors to be more focus?
19. What else should be studied before launching HELP's service in terms of marketing?