

## MARKETING EDUCATION IN U.S. NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: STATUS AND IMPLICATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Decisions about marketing curriculum are not always made within the realm of business programs and colleges at U.S. universities, especially in the case of nonprofit marketing. Nonprofit management programs – the programs most likely to educate future leaders of nonprofit organizations – frequently have a marketing component even though the programs often reside outside of the auspices of business programs and colleges. As the nonprofit sector continues to grow and employment growth in the nonprofit sector outpaces the growth in the for-profit sector (Salamon and Sokolowski 2005) so too will the need for astute graduates of nonprofit management programs with marketing skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is important for marketing educators to know what the current status of marketing education is in nonprofit management programs. This research presents the findings of a survey of nonprofit management programs in the U.S., the coverage of marketing in those programs, and the program directors' perceptions of marketing's role in their curriculum.

Nonprofits include religious, educational, health-related, social welfare, arts and culture, youth, environmental, as well as business and professional member organizations (Wymer, Kowles, and Gomes 2006). Beyond this diverse focus, non-profits are challenged by the complex mix of limited finances, high expectations in terms of performance, multiple stakeholders including a large segment of volunteers in their workforce, and a tradition of collegial decision making (Andreasen, Goodstein, and Wilson 2005).

While nonprofit organizations have significant differences from for-profit organizations there has been a trend to adapt for-profit marketing practices to the nonprofit sector (Clarke and Mount 2000). Just as nonprofits have grown in size and number, so too have the use and adaptation of business marketing skills and knowledge to nonprofit organizations. However, despite the need for and increasing use of marketing skills and knowledge there is evidence that the nonprofit sector makes

much less use of marketing tools and concepts than for-profit firms (Andreasen et al. 2005).

The research examines the findings from a sample of 74 of the 251 nonprofit management programs in the U.S. Responses revealed that the programs often reside outside of business programs or colleges with directors who had a background that most likely did not include marketing. Program directors have incomplete perceptions of what is involved with marketing and do not always have marketing as part of their curriculum. The importance of offering marketing curriculum varied depending upon the location of the program within the university. Providing excellence in nonprofit marketing education needs to be more vigorously pursued to improve this situation, particularly in an era when nonprofits are growing in size and number. This article presents the status of marketing pedagogy in nonprofit management programs and offers suggestions for improvements that have implications for all marketing educators.

### REFERENCES

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