

MARKETING AND GRADUATE EDUCATION
IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS/PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Wayne A. Roberts, Jr., University of Alaska, Juneau

ABSTRACT

Despite the belief among marketers that marketing is applicable to the public sector an examination of top MPA programs revealed a dearth of marketing courses. Various reasons for this situation are suggested, including a lack of understanding of marketing among MPA faculty, and preliminary suggestions are made to remedy the situation.

INTRODUCTION

The idea that marketing is applicable to public and nonprofit organizations is no longer questioned within marketing circles. Its acceptance, in fact, by marketing academicians was quite swift. Kotler and Levy first made the case that marketing is applicable to public and nonprofit organizations in 1969, and a study by Nichols just a few years later indicated that 95% of surveyed marketing educators felt that marketing should be broadened to include nonbusiness organizations (Kotler and Levy 1969; Nichols 1974). Hunt's three-dichotomies model, undoubtedly the most common classification scheme concerning the scope and nature of marketing, explicitly incorporates the nonprofit sector (1976).

In 1978 Lovelock and Weinberg examined the influence of the broadened concept of marketing on the marketing discipline, on management practices in select nonprofit fields, and on practitioner oriented journals and concluded that nonbusiness marketing is "taken seriously in academia, is having a growing impact on management practice in a diverse range of applications, and is contributing to general advancement of the field of marketing," and that "public and nonprofit marketing has come of age." (1978, p. 13).

If marketing is as applicable to public sector organizations as marketing educators seem to believe, then marketing, or at least aspects of the discipline, should be an important area of study for future professional managers of public organizations. The purpose of this paper is to examine the extent to which marketing, as marketing, has been adopted by schools which offer master's degrees in public affairs/public administration. Further, some suggestions will be offered as to how marketing educators might begin to more actively market the subject of marketing to public sector educators.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS/
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Similar in concept to the MBA degree, the Master's of Public Administration or Public Affairs (MPA) degrees are designed to prepare individuals for professional managerial careers in the public sector. The programs vary from one to two years in length, and are offered through political science departments, separate professional schools or departments, and through professional schools or departments which offer other degrees as well. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) is the primary professional organization, and acts in the capacity of an accrediting agency for master's programs.

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- political and legal institutions and processes
- economic and social institutions and processes
- organization and management concepts, including human resource administration
- concepts and techniques of financial administration
- techniques of analysis, including quantitative, economic, and statistical methods." (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration 1981, p. 2).

Note that marketing is rather conspicuous in its absence.

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Information from microfiche copies of catalogs and bulletins concerning MPA program courses was collected for 29 of the top 39 programs in the U.S. based on reputation as reported by Morgan, et al. (1981, p. 669). The criterion for inclusion in the sample was simply the availability of the relevant information. The oldest catalogs/bulletins were for academic years 1980-1981 (Ohio State) and 1980-1982 (University of Minnesota). A number of catalogs/bulletins were for the 1983-84 academic year. A course was considered to be a marketing-type course if the title or the description implied that the course was concerned with marketing, either in the generic sense or with traditional marketing considerations (e.g., marketing research, one of the four Ps, etc.). Public Policy courses were not considered marketing courses. Further, while most programs permit students to take courses in other departments, only those courses which were offered in the department issuing the degree and whose course titles and/or descriptions would clearly be seen and considered by MPA students, and those courses which were offered by other departments and explicitly listed as courses available to MPA students, were considered. In other words, the attempt was to consider only those courses MPA students would consider in the absence of special counseling or interests.

The results of the survey are presented in Table 1. Absolutely no schools required a course which explicitly covered marketing (with the possible exception of Cornell), and the number of marketing-type elective courses was pathetically small.

DISCUSSION

There are a number of possible reasons for the scarcity of marketing courses for MPA students. Among the most likely are the following: 1) Marketing may be covered within the context of other courses, 2) the paucity of material available may not warrant the organization of a full course, 3) there may not be enough qualified instructors available, or 4) marketing may not be perceived to be of sufficient importance to public sector managers by MPA program decision-makers. While these are not necessarily independent, each will be discussed separately.

TABLE 1
Marketing and Marketing-Type Courses
Offered MPA Students at Various Schools

School Rank	School	Required Marketing Courses	Title of Elective Marketing Courses
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2	Harvard	0	None
3	U. of Southern California	N/A ^a	Public Relations Marketing in Health
6	Texas, Austin	0	None
7	Princeton	0	None
8	Pittsburgh	0	Information Policies
9	Michigan, Ann Arbor	0	None
10	Georgia University	0	None
11	Carnegie-Mellon	0	Demand Analysis
12	Minnesota	0	None
13	Ohio State	0	None
14	American	0	None
15	North Carolina, Chapel Hill	0	None
16	Florida State	0	None
17	Kansas	0	None
18	George Washington	0	None
20	SUNY-Albany	0	None
21	Columbia	0	None
27	Cornell	1 ^b	None
28.5	Cal. State - Long Beach	0	Seminar in Transportation
28.5	U. of Washington	0	None
30.5	U. of Cal. - Irvine	0	Public Sector Marketing Marketing Research
30.5	N. Illinois University	0	None
32	California State, Hayward	0	None
33	U. Maryland, College Park	0	Seminar in Public Opinion
34	Penn State	0	None
35	Arizona State University	0	Survey Research in the Public Sector
38	The New School	0	Advanced Seminar in Managing Nonprofit Organizations
39	U. of Oklahoma	0	None

^aNot Available

^bOn page 6 of Cornell's 1982-83 Graduate School of Business and Public Administration bulletin marketing is listed as a required course for MPA students. However, on page 30 it is not listed as a requirement for students other than MBA students.

With respect to the first potential reason, it is possible that marketing, as marketing, is covered at least in an introductory fashion in other courses. It is questionable, however, whether the discussions are any greater than management concept discussions are, say, in finance, accounting, and economic courses in MBA programs. While this is a question which must be resolved by a more empirical analysis, an examination of the few MPA programs that share a common core with the MBA programs indicate that this is probably the case. For example, at the University of California at Irvine MPA and MBA students take 10 common courses. The core courses cover management, organizational analysis, economics and quantitative analysis, while marketing, as marketing, appears as a separate required course for MBA students. There is no MPA counterpart.

With respect to the potential problem of insufficient material to warrant the development of a full course, there is clearly much less public sector marketing material than private sector or even nonbusiness marketing material. There are, as yet, no marketing texts which focus on the public sector, with the possible exception of one (see Mokwa and Permut 1981). Such a limitation certainly would make the development of a public sector marketing course more difficult, but it is hard to believe that the material available is not sufficient for at least shorter courses. Business schools are adding nonprofit marketing courses to their curriculum, and it would seem that such courses could be easily modified for public sector marketing. Perhaps the '3 credit' mode of course offerings, as well as the lack of an accepted text, is acting as a barrier to entry for public sector marketing courses.

The third potential problem, the lack of qualified instructors, may be a real problem for some schools, including those schools which have administrative hurdles with respect to sharing faculty among admini- 59

strative units. However, as pointed out in the previous paragraph, a number of business schools have generated nonprofit marketing courses, and so it would seem that by itself this potentiality cannot account for the dearth of marketing courses in MPA programs.

The fourth potential reason, that MPA program faculty may not perceive marketing as important enough to public sector management to warrant formal coursework, is more serious than the others to the extent it holds. Marketing courses, particularly required marketing courses, will not become part of the curriculum until MPA program decision-makers are convinced that marketing is something worth teaching to future public sector managers.

MPA programs evolved out of political science departments. Indeed, in 1974 approximately 36% of the MPA programs were offered through political science departments, compared to less than 17% which were associated with generic administrative schools or business departments (Mackelprang and Fritschler 1975, p. 184). This, combined with the fact that marketers began to consider the public sector only approximately 15 years ago, makes it likely that faculty of MPA programs have had limited exposure to marketing. It is further likely that their exposure has been mostly limited to publications and presentations by marketing academicians targeted towards public sector academicians. If little has been done in this regard then very few MPA faculty may have a clear understanding about the nature, scope, and potential of marketing. In examining the extent of nonbusiness marketing publications, Lovelock and Weinberg examined material that was either targeted towards marketing academicians (e.g., AMA and AIDS Conference Proceedings), or towards practitioners. It is unlikely that either type of publication, or nonbusiness marketing books for that matter, would get attention from people who are not familiar with marketing.

In order to gauge the amount of exposure public affairs/public administration academicians are getting with respect to marketing an attempt was made to locate marketing articles in academic public affairs/public administration journals. Morgan, et al. listed 10 journals which they used to measure the productivity of faculty associated with graduate programs in public affairs/public administration (p. 668, 1981). Five of these are indexed in the Public Affairs Information Service (P.A.I.S.) bulletins. Hence, P.A.I.S. bulletins covering the period from October 1972 through June 1983 (volumes 59-69) were examined for relevant listings under the following categories:

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The results of the search were as follows: There were absolutely no marketing-type articles in any of the journals which were listed in Morgan, et al. and indexed in P.A.I.S. In fact, only one article was found which was concerned with marketing and which was not in a business oriented journal (see Kotler and Kotler 1981). Further, while P.A.I.S. indexed the Journal of Marketing in 1973 (volume 59), it discontinued doing so after that date (however, it does index the Journal of Retailing, the Journal of Advertising, and the Journal of Consumer Affairs, among others). Hence, almost coinciding with the acceptance of the broadened concept of marketing the primary literature indexing service for public administration and public affairs stopped indexing the premier marketing journal.

Thus, it appears that marketing academicians have been largely discussing public sector marketing with others interested in marketing, and not with MPA faculty.

THE MARKETING OF MARKETING TO PUBLIC SECTOR GRADUATE PROGRAMS

If public sector marketing is going to be accepted as a legitimate, worthwhile area of study for future public sector managers then marketing academicians should begin to seriously and systematically consider the marketing of marketing. We either do not have a product which as of yet adequately meets the needs of MPA programs, or we have a promotional problem, or both. While the charting of a marketing strategy deserves considerable thought, some preliminary suggestions are offered below.

To begin with, professional marketing organizations can take an active role by forming ad hoc committees or task forces to 1) more closely examine the state of marketing in MPA programs, 2) look for and organize around opportunities for marketing the discipline to public sector educational programs, and 3) develop appropriate strategies and tactics. Perhaps some joint working sessions or 'educational workshops' done in conjunction with NASPAA might be worth sponsoring. Such meetings would facilitate needed learning on the part of public administration educators and marketing educators. Another possibility would be the development of special workshops targeted towards MPA educators.

Other things professional marketing organizations might consider include 1) the granting of special cost-free memberships to influential individuals, 2) the granting of free subscriptions to the organization's journal(s) for a limited time for influential members, 3) inviting public administration educators to professional marketing association meetings, and 4) the sponsorship of some marketing educators in professional public administration organizations.

Individuals can do a number of obvious things to promote marketing. They can, of course, join different professional public administration organizations and attend meetings, make presentations, and possibly get administratively involved. Second, they can invite public administration faculty to seminars and class sessions which deal with public sector marketing, and reciprocate by offering to attend relevant class sessions in the MPA program. Third, conceptual articles concerning marketing and public sector management can be written and targeted towards journals which are actively subscribed to by public sector educators. Finally, basic and applied research undertaken within a public sector framework can help bridge the two areas.

CONCLUSIONS

None of the MPA programs examined in this study require marketing as a course of study, and surprisingly few have marketing-type elective courses. This could be due to a number of reasons, including a lack of material, a lack of qualified instructors, or a widely held belief among MPA faculty that separate marketing courses are not necessary because a) marketing is already adequately covered in existing courses or b) marketing is not important enough to warrant the addition of courses. To the extent that the last reason is a reflection of the views of MPA faculty, and to the extent that this is due to ignorance with respect to the scope, nature and methods of marketing, then positive steps will need to be taken if marketing courses are

to be integrated into MPA programs.

Since public sector marketing is fairly new, and since MPA programs grew out of political science, it is likely that unless marketing academicians have made an effort at educating MPA faculty they may not be familiar with marketing. Given that no marketing articles were found in academic public sector journals when P.A.I.S. bulletins representing over a decade of publications were examined, it appears that this is the case.

Until and unless MPA program decision-makers are convinced that marketing is relevant to the public sector, marketing will not be a part of MPA programs. Further, until the appearance of public sector marketing texts or until sufficient marketing materials concerning the public sector are collected, such courses will be fewer than otherwise would be the case.

Some progress has certainly been made in nonbusiness marketing since Lovelock and Weinberg's paper (1978). In particular Praeger Publishers now has a series of four books in public and nonprofit sector marketing, and Kotler's nonprofit marketing text is now in its second edition (1982). However, it seems clear that much more could be done. Both professional groups and individuals can and should participate in the marketing of marketing. Professional associations can be used to devise and implement strategies, and individuals can join public sector associations and generate publications for academic public sector journals.

Public sector education can become a significant factor in marketing beyond 1984 if marketing academicians actively pursue this possibility. To the extent that the study of marketing can make public sector managers more effective and efficient marketing academicians have a responsibility to attempt to educate the relevant decision-makers. Further, the discipline of marketing will undoubtedly benefit through the interaction of marketing scholars with public administration scholars. The time has come to extend discussions of public sector marketing to include public sector educators.

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