An Operational Model for eMarketing Technology Deployment in Higher Education in the UK

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Abstract : The terms "eMarketing," "online marketing," and "Internet marketing" are frequently interchanged and can often be considered synonymous. eMarketing technologies, tactics, tools and strategies can help UK universities to achieve potential competitive benefits. In UK universities, the uptake of eMarketing has been relatively limited, and the complexity of managing eMarketing has become more challenging. Many UK universities are only at an early stage of developing their online marketing capabilities and have not yet to identify their core digital marketing tools and techniques. This research investigates eMarketing adoption and deployment initiatives and provides insights into how to successfully develop and implement these initiatives in UK universities. Moreover, this research puts forward a provisional conceptual framework for eMarketing strategy implementation that relates strategy objectives and operational requirements to technology utilization. The research conducted the epistemological assumptions relate to "how things really are" and "how things really work" in an assumed reality. The methodological assumptions relate to the process of building the conceptual framework and assessing what it can provide about the "real" world. Based on the concept, the framework recognizes the various eMarketing channels, eMarketing techniques and eMarketing strategies that are used to reach the widest student base. A qualitative research method, based on narrative in-depth case studies, includes an empirical investigation at the University of Gloucestershire, University of Wales Trinity St David, University of Westminster, and London Metropolitan Business school. The selection of case/ university provides additional value because there is no previous study studied at this level. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews have been conducted to gather data from selected universities' academics and professional services staff. Narrative inquiry has been employed as a tool for analysis of conversations and interviews. Framework analysis used to identify common themes to build/ innovate an operational model from the original provisional conceptual framework. The proposed operational model will provide appropriate eMarketing strategies that create and sustain a competitive business development (business expansion and market growth). Besides, it will offer to one or several segments of customers and its network of partners for creating, marketing and building up relationships to generate profitable and sustainable revenue streams. In this context, the operational model will serve as an instructional-technological interactions roadmap, outlining essential components to guide the eMarketing technological deployment in UK universities.

Keywords : eMarketing, digital technologies, marketing mix, eMarketing plan, strategies, tactics, conceptual framework, operational model, higher education organizations