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## RESEARCH OF THE MARKETING COMPLEX OF THE PHARMACY INSTITUTION

**Abstract.** Specific features of pharmaceutical marketing, in which the patient is the main one, are defined. It is shown that the most relevant for Ukrainian pharmaceuticals is the implementation of the concept of social and ethical marketing. Compared to the traditional marketing complex, which consists of four components: product, price, place, promotion, pharmacy adds – people – who are directly related to the sale of the product. An assessment of the pharmaceutical market of Ukraine is given. An analysis of consumers and competitors was carried out using the example of Elinite LLC pharmacy. The marketing activity of the Elinite LLC pharmacy was studied, the main problems in the organization of marketing were analyzed and measures for its improvement were developed.

**Keywords:** *marketing, pharmacy, management of marketing activities, pharmaceutical market, pharmaceutical marketing.*

**Introduction.** The development of market relations in the modern world has led to the fact that every enterprise has to fight for its existence, and the methods of struggle in this case can be completely different, be it advertising technologies, PR technologies, marketing solutions, etc. It is common knowledge that the effectiveness of any department depends on how marketing activities are carried out. The use of marketing in the management of economic

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entities in the conditions of a competitive market with a stable external environment is indisputable, and in periods of aggravation of the financial and economic situation and crisis phenomena, the role of marketing significantly increases.

The sale of medicines is a commercial activity that is carried out both wholesale and retail through pharmacies. In pharmacy retailing, the scale of competition reaches incredible levels, so as of the beginning of 2022, there are about 20,000 retail outlets (pharmacies and pharmacy points) in Ukraine (Pharma, 2022). Therefore, ensuring the high quality of management of a pharmacy establishment, which excludes the adoption of inconsistent and erroneous management decisions, becomes of primary importance and special relevance.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Despite the active development of marketing concepts abroad, as evidenced by the works of such marketers as I. Ansoff, R. Daft, D. Jobber, F. Kotler, E. Dichtl, D. Cravens, A. Dayan and others, one of the main problems is that the transfer of the work of foreign marketing specialists to the Ukrainian space does not always bring the expected results. And the often used reduction in the cost of products in pursuit of greater sales leads to a decrease in the company's profit and deterioration of its financial indicators, which is unacceptable.

The works of many domestic scientists and specialists are devoted to the study of marketing activities: I. Akulich, S. Belous (2021), Yu. Golyshev (2017), L. Dorokhova (2020), O. Ishchenko, N. Karpenko, Z. Mnushko, Yu. Melnyk (2017), O. Piven (2020), I. Tkachenko, A. Yakovenko (2021), S. Yaremenko (2019) and others. They demonstrate the general principles of organizing the marketing activities of pharmacies or the implementation of individual marketing functions. But it should be noted that to date, applied aspects and specific features of improving the management of marketing activities of modern domestic pharmacies have not been researched much, which determines the relevance of the research topic.

**The purpose of the article** is to research marketing activities and determine directions for improving the marketing complex of a pharmacy.

**Formulation of the main material.** In general, marketing can be considered as a comprehensive approach to solving the problems of studying, forming and satisfying the needs of an individual, which are constantly changing, as well as to ensuring mutually beneficial relations between market subjects in the process of interaction. The marketing mix is a set of marketing tools that are used to obtain the desired response of the target market.

The traditional process of marketing management, which was inherent in the use of enterprises until the end of the last century, provided for the implementation of an algorithm based on the following components: study of needs – selection of potential markets and consumers – functional features and competitive advantages of the product – market segmentation and product positioning – selection of target groups consumers – increase in sales volume, market share, profit. However, the fulfillment of planned sales and profit indicators does not always ensure the strengthening of the financial and economic condition of the enterprise.

Changes in the terms of use of marketing are caused by the increase in consumer demand for the quality of pharmaceutical products, the provision of

services, and the price and value of medicinal products. Therefore, the prerequisites for the use of new enterprise management approaches are being formed, focused on increasing the value of business, a significant part of which can be intangible assets (technological resources, knowledge and skills of personnel, marketing assets – brand awareness, relationships in product distribution channels, customer and consumer loyalty, etc.). Accordingly, it becomes natural to improve managerial marketing concepts and comprehensive application of marketing functions in the activity of pharmacies.

Pharmaceutical marketing is distinguished as an activity aimed at studying the needs of a specific person in pharmaceutical care and meeting his needs through exchange in a more effective way than that of competitors. The peculiarity of pharmaceutical marketing is that the main thing in it is the patient, and not the entrepreneur – a manufacturer of medicinal products or an intermediary. For the domestic pharmaceutical market, the most relevant is the introduction of the concept of social and ethical marketing (Civaner, 2014). According to it, the goals of the pharmacy are achieved taking into account the needs of all categories of patients and population groups, it is aimed at ensuring the long-term well-being of the individual consumer and society in general.

Traditionally, the marketing complex consists of four components: product, price, methods of distribution, methods of promotion, the so-called “4p” – according to the English words product, price, place, promotion. In pharmacy, the complex is represented by “5p” (Koçkaya & Wertheimer, 2020).

The first “p” – place – a place, position, where contact is made between the seller and the buyer, the wholesaler and the intermediary, the customer and the manufacturer. The place involves choosing a strategy that will have to be implemented in the future. The company should identify the segment of the market in which the contingent of consumers of their goods is located. For example, a pharmacy, pharmacy warehouse, pharmacy store, etc.

The second “p” is a product, goods, products, i.e. pharmaceutical products: medicines, medical products, etc. It is necessary to determine the quality and service of this market and compare costs and prices with competing products and services.

The third “p” – promotion – increase, movement, promotion of the product. In the market, it is necessary to promote the product to the consumer in the form of advertising and organization of sales of the product. It includes distance, method of transportation, storage, method of implementation.

The fourth “p” – price – the price of the consumer. Here it is appropriate to recall one of the precepts of marketing: “In a good situation, at least 13 % of the population should be able to purchase medicines at prices calculated for a modest living wage” (Civaner, 2014).

The fifth “p” – people – people who are directly related to the sale of goods (pharmacists, pharmacists). Personnel is a marketing factor. For success in the company, it is necessary to carry out a continuous process of improving the education of its employees.

Market segmentation is important in pharmaceutical marketing. Segmentation of the pharmaceutical market can be by products and by consumer groups. In the pharmaceutical sector, two main types of product segmentation are used: market segmentation based on the therapeutic groups of the IMS company and market segmentation based on the indications of the medicinal

product (Kevrekidis, Minarikova et al., 2018). Market segmentation based on the data of the IMS company provides data on the volume of sales of medicinal products by therapeutic groups. WHO recommendations were adopted as the basis for the formation of therapeutic drug groups. This division characterizes the market well, but there is too much product focus of this representation. As with the analysis of the total volume of the market, the analysis of the market segment is carried out both in money and in annual terms. Sometimes the doctor has the opportunity to choose drugs of different classes for the treatment of the same disease.

The main disadvantage of market segmentation by therapeutic classes is that this segmentation does not take into account the peculiarities of medical practice. Physicians very often think in terms of symptom categories and select drugs according to perceived associations with disease symptoms rather than according to the therapeutic class of the drug. Market segmentation by drug indication is based on a specific group of symptoms (e.g., relief of cold symptoms, headache relief) or treatment of a specific disease (e.g., treatment of arthritis). In this way, the number of prescriptions issued for the treatment of a specific disease is estimated. This type of segmentation is more realistic and more customer-oriented, since the doctor associates the appearance of symptoms with a specific disease (Kitcha, 2019).

The segments of the pharmaceutical market differ significantly due to strong competition or price reductions due to the emergence of generic drugs. It is necessary to carry out both an analysis of the number of drugs sold or the number of prescribed prescriptions, but also an analysis of the actual cost of drugs sold or the cost of prescribed prescriptions.

According to statistical data, at the beginning of 2022, there were 2,525 pharmacies in Ukraine, excluding pharmacies, the number of which is 5 times greater (Pharma, 2022). With the positive dynamics of the population's income in Ukraine, there is a clear development of the pharmaceutical market (indices for 2020 and 2021 were 103.7 and 103 %, respectively). Since the beginning of 2020, the pandemic has also had a significant impact on the pharmaceutical market – there are changes in the volume and structure of sales of medicinal products (Priyanka, 2020).

The main share of the pharmacy basket in 2020-2022 in Ukraine consists of medicinal products: 81.1-82.9 % in monetary terms and 60.6-64.4 % in kind (Pharma 2022: Marketing the future. Which path will you take? *Pharmaceuticals and Life Sciences*). Medicinal products belong to the category of vital goods, which significantly affects their demand. In 2022, 78.5 billion hryvnias of medicinal products were sold in Ukraine through pharmacies, which is 776 million packages. Growth rates were 1 % in real terms and 21.7 % in hryvnia terms. Regarding the dynamics of the structure of pharmacy sales, the assortment shows an increase in the specific weight of dietary supplements, replacement of available drugs by more expensive ones, and an increase in the share of drugs produced abroad. The first in the rating of manufacturers of pharmaceuticals presented on the market of Ukraine in 2020-2022 is the domestic company Farmak with a market share of 5.81 %.

There are no changes among distributors of the pharmaceutical market: BaDM (Dnipro), Optima-Pharm (Kyiv) and Venta LTD (Dnipro). In 2022, they will occupy 85.7 % of the market for supplies to pharmacy chains, compared to

83.8 % in 2021. The fiercest competition is between BaDM and Optima-Pharm, which together captured 75.7 % of the market (Pharmacy Weekly, 2020-2021).

The subject of this research was the pharmacy institution Elinait LLC in Dnipro. During 2020-2022, the analyzed enterprise is profitable, profitable and generally liquid, but there are certain problems with financial stability and dependence on loan capital in economic activity. The net return on equity is from 15 to 24 kopecks per UAH 1 of invested capital, which is a satisfactory value for a pharmacy institution. The business activity of the institution is quite high (the duration of turnover of goods is equal to 80 days). It is positive that the duration of turnover of accounts payable exceeds the duration of turnover of receivables by almost 3 times, that is, the company uses commercial credit.

As a result of the survey of consumers of Elinite LLC, the following was revealed. Among the factors for choosing a pharmacy by customers, the main ones are: convenience of location 27 %, affordability 20% and breadth of assortment 19 %. In the structure of consumers by group of pharmacy assortment, the largest segment was found – medicinal products, 39.4 %. Medical products and dietary supplements have close values: 17.32 and 15.07 %, respectively. Effectiveness, safety and price are the key factors influencing the decision to buy medicines. The main advertising channels were advertising on television (45 %) and on the Internet (22 %). The average buyer of the Elinite LLC pharmacy can be characterized as follows: it is a woman aged 31–45 with an average level of income who buys medicines.

Among the main competitors of Elinite LLC within the territorial district of Dnipro, almost a monopoly of pharmacy sales is Podorozhnyk pharmacy, whose market share reaches 63 %. Direct competitors with close sales are Ne Bolii (16 %) and Sonechko (10 %) pharmacies, with which Elinite LLC (8 %) can compete for customers. The conducted 7p-analysis (pack, process, personnel were also taken into account) showed that the analyzed institution ranks third among its competitors (Table 1).

**Table 1**

Analysis of competitors of Elinite LLC using 7p-analysis

P's	A	B	C	D	E
Quality	5	5	5	5	5
Assortment	5	5	5	4	3
Packaging	5	5	5	5	5
Step-accessibility	5	5	5	4	4
High permeability	5	5	4	5	4
Visibility from the roadway	5	5	5	4	4

A – Elinite LLC Pharmacy;

B – Podorozhnyk pharmacy;

C – Ne Bolii pharmacy;

D – Sonechko pharmacy;

E – Budget pharmacy.

Continue of Table 1

Price					
Accessibility	4	5	4	4	3
Discounts	4	5	4	3	3
Stability	4	5	3	4	4
Promotion					
Advertising	4	5	5	4	4
Tastings	1	1	1	1	1
Image	4	5	5	4	3
Pack					
Attractiveness	5	5	5	4	4
Convenience	4	5	4	3	4
Biodegradability	3	4	3	3	3
Process					
Availability of goods	5	5	5	4	3
Visible location on the shelves	5	5	5	3	4
Aroma marketing	2	2	2	2	2
Personnel					
Qualification	4	5	5	4	4
Experience	4	4	5	4	3
Quality of service	4	5	4	3	3
The resulting indicator:	87	96	89	77	73

Source: Compiled by the authors based on their own research

The Elinite LLC pharmacy should pay attention to the range of products, the organization of advertising, the creation of the image of the pharmacy, the convenience and biodegradability of the packaging, the qualifications of the staff and the quality of service. The results of the SWOT-analysis show (Table 2): Elinite LLC pharmacy has enough strengths, the development of which will make it possible to increase the volume of product sales. Flexible pricing policy and relatively low selling prices allow to increase the market share.

**Table 2**

SWOT-analysis of the Elinite LLC pharmacy

	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
SWOT-analysis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wide range of products.</li> <li>2. Availability of exclusive medicinal and cosmetic products.</li> <li>3. Long-term contracts with manufacturers of medicinal and cosmetic products</li> <li>4. Low sale prices.</li> <li>5. Flexible pricing policy.</li> <li>6. Presence of regular buyers</li> <li>7. Carrying out promotions that stimulate sales.</li> <li>8. Supply guarantee.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low market share.</li> <li>2. Insufficient qualification of personnel and quality of customer service.</li> <li>3. Low level of efficiency of the inventory management system</li> <li>4. Significant workload of specialists.</li> <li>5. Underdeveloped system of marketing information</li> <li>6. Insufficiently effective marketing activity.</li> </ol>

Continue of Table 2

Opportunities (O)	Strength and Opportunities	Weaknesses and Opportunities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Transition of most foreign manufacturers from intensive to selective distribution.</li> <li>2. State support and orientation towards a healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>3. Growth in the number of regular customers.</li> <li>4. Increasing the number of branches in the city.</li> <li>5. Increase in turnover and profit due to competitive prices</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Flexible pricing policy and relatively low selling prices allow increasing the market share of the pharmacy.</li> <li>2. Long-term contracts with manufacturers allow for selective distribution.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insufficient qualification of staff and quality of customer service can lead to a decrease in the efficiency of the pharmacy.</li> <li>2. An insufficiently developed system of marketing information will contribute to a decrease in market share.</li> </ol>
Threats (T)	Strengths and Threats	Weaknesses and Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Instability of the national currency.</li> <li>2. Imperfection of tax legislation.</li> <li>3. Complexity of permit procedures for pharmacy institutions.</li> <li>4. Intensification of competition.</li> <li>5. Increase in purchase prices.</li> <li>6. Lack of funds of medical and preventive institutions for purchases.</li> <li>7. Decrease in the purchasing power of the population.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Instability of the national currency and inflationary processes will contribute to the growth of selling prices.</li> <li>2. The low purchasing power of the population and the lack of working capital in treatment and prevention institutions can lead to a decrease in the institution's sales volume.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Insufficient qualification of the institution's staff and an insufficiently developed system of marketing information can lead to the loss of customers.</li> <li>2. A low level of inventory management efficiency can contribute to the loss of the pharmacy's competitiveness.</li> </ol>

Source: Compiled by the authors based on their own research

On the other hand, the pharmacy has weaknesses, the neglect of which threatens the loss of competitiveness. Insufficient qualification of the staff can lead to the loss of customers, and the low level of efficiency of inventory management can contribute to the loss of competitiveness of the pharmacy. Therefore, the strengthening of marketing activities is a significant reserve for the development of a pharmacy, increasing the volume of product sales.

When conducting a PEST-analysis (Table 3), it was determined that economic, political and technological factors are important for the Elinite LLC pharmacy, including: changes in taxation norms and the legislative framework in the field of drug price regulation, an increase in drug prices pharmacy assortment due to inflation, new technologies in the production and sale of medicines.

**Table 3**

## PEST-model of the Elinite LLC pharmacy establishment

Legend	Impact Factors	Industry Response	Score	Probability	Outcome
Political					4,8
P1	Changes in the legislative framework in the field of price regulation of medicinal products	Decrease in the capacity of the pharmacy market	3	80 %	2,4
P2	Limiting the markup on vital and necessary medicines	Decrease in the profitability of the pharmacy business	2	60 %	1,2
P3	The strategic focus of the state on the revival of domestic pharmacy	Expansion of pharmacy business	2	60 %	1,2
Economical					5,5
E1	Low solvent demand in the domestic market	Decrease in sales volumes	3	60 %	1,8
E2	Increase in product prices due to inflation	A decrease in the turnover of pharmacies and an increase in costs	2	80 %	1,6
E3	Instability of foreign exchange rates (USD, EUR)	Decrease in the profitability of the pharmacy business	3	70 %	2,1
Social					3,0
S1	The imperfection of the legislative framework led to the appearance of counterfeit medicines	Decrease in demand for pharmacy products	2	40 %	0,8
S2	Dissemination of information in the mass media about the conspiracy of pharmacists and doctors with the aim of imposing more expensive drugs	Decrease in demand for pharmacy products	2	50 %	1,0
S3	The need for pharmaceutical staff of pharmacies to face the negative attitude of consumers	Shortage of new pharmaceutical personnel	2	60 %	1,2
Technological					4,6
T1	New technologies are used in the production of medicines	Increasing the profitability of the pharmacy business due to lower product prices	3	60 %	1,8
T2	Production of medicines with the least side effects	Increasing the turnover of pharmacies due to the increase in demand for higher quality drugs	3	40 %	1,2
T3	The appearance of more advanced equipment	Reducing the burden on pharmacists	2	80 %	1,6

Source: Compiled by the authors based on their own research



As for the microenvironment, the main attention should be paid to competitors, Elinite LLC has not been operating on the market for so long and is just beginning to take a firm position.

**Conclusions.** As a result of the study of the marketing activity of the Elinite LLC pharmacy, the following shortcomings were identified. There is no integrated approach in marketing organization. The structure of the institution lacks a marketing specialist who could cover all marketing functions. The employee who is entrusted with the functions of a marketer is overloaded. As a result, marketing activities are not effective enough. When forming the advertising budget, the “residual method” is followed, and marketing activities are carried out directly in the pharmacy only at the expense of representatives of pharmaceutical manufacturers and wholesale suppliers.

Insufficiently used tools in social networks to attract and retain customers, outdated data on the company’s website. The assortment of goods is not optimized, the presence of non-liquids among medicines reaches 5 %, dietary supplements – 4 %. Therefore, some of the marketing tools require further development to increase sales. Among the main areas of marketing improvement, the following are proposed:

- optimization of the organization of marketing activities due to the use of integrated marketing communications;
- increasing consumer awareness of the pharmacy chain (advertising, exhibitions, mailing, auctions, site modification);
- studying the activities of the leading enterprises in the industry to increase their own level of competitiveness (benchmarking);
- increasing the coverage of the target audience with the help of advertising on the Internet (for this, it is necessary to more actively use the possibilities of social networks, improve and update the existing company website);
- change in budget planning for marketing activities, mandatory independent PR and promotion campaigns at the pharmacy level;
- professional retraining of personnel (regular trainings, seminars, courses) to improve the quality of service;
- staff incentives for specific indicators;
- development of a program of cooperation with medical institutions and doctors and establishment of cooperation of the pharmacy institution with reference services for pharmaceutical preparations;
- re-planning of the interior of the trading hall and expansion of the range of additional services.

Due to the implementation of the proposed measures to improve the marketing complex of the Elinite LLC pharmacy (additional marketing costs of UAH 159,000), sales revenue can increase by UAH 505,000 or by 10 %. Profit from operating activities will give a possible increase of 75 thousand hryvnias. That is, 1 UAH, additionally invested funds in marketing activities, should bring UAH 0.47 of profit from operating activities, or UAH 0.64 of net profit. Therefore, the specified measures are economically justified and allow to improve its financial results, so they can be proposed for other retail points of the pharmaceutical market.

*Conflict of Interest and other Ethics Statements*

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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**Вікторія ОНИЩЕНКО, Олексій СЕРЬОГІН, Камерон БАТМАНГЛІЧ**  
**ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ КОМПЛЕКСУ МАРКЕТИНГУ**  
**АПТЕЧНОГО ЗАКЛАДУ**

**Анотація.** Визначені особливості фармацевтичного маркетингу, головним у якому є пацієнт (його потреба вилікувати захворювання чи підтримати своє здоров'я), а не виробник лікарських товарів або посередник. Показано, що найбільш актуальним для української фармацевтики є впровадження концепції соціально-етичного маркетингу. Якщо традиційно маркетинговий комплекс складається з чотирьох компонентів: product, price, place, promotion, так звані "4п", то у фармації додається п'яте "п" – people – люди, які безпосередньо пов'язані з реалізацією товару (фармацевти).

Проведено оцінку фармацевтичного ринку України, індекси зростання якого у 2020-2021 р. дорівнюють 103 %. Основну частку аптечного кошика складають лікарські засоби – до 64 %, яких було продано у 2022 р. на 78,5 млрд. грн. При цьому збільшується питома вага дієтичних добавок, дешеві препарати замінюються більш дорогими, зростає частка препаратів, вироблених за кордоном. Найбільший виробник фармацевтичних препаратів – компанія "Фармак". Лідерами серед дистриб'юторів фармацевтичного ринку є БадМ, Оптіма-Фарм і Вента ЛТД, які у 2022 р. займають 85,7 % ринку поставок в аптечні мережі.

Проведений аналіз споживачів і конкурентів на прикладі аптечного ТОВ "Елінайт". Серед факторів вибору клієнтами аптечного закладу головними виступають: зручність розташування 27 %, цінова доступність 20 % і широта асортименту 19 %. Серед покупців-фізосіб більшість складають жінки у віці 31-45 років із середнім доходом. Ключовими факторами впливу на рішення про купівлю лікарських засобів є їх ефективність, безпека та ціна. Майже монополістом аптечних продажів серед конкурентів ТОВ "Елінайт" є аптечний заклад "Подорожник", частка ринку якого досягає 63 %. Безпосередніми конкурентами з близькими продажами є аптеки "Не болій" (16 %) і "Сонечко" (10 %). Проведений 7р-аналіз (враховувалися додатково pack, process, personnel) показав, що ТОВ "Елінайт" посідає третє місце серед своїх конкурентів.

Зроблено оцінку маркетингової діяльності аптечного закладу ТОВ "Елінайт". Отримані результати SWOT-аналізу свідчать, що у аптеки досить сильних сторін, використання та розвиток яких дасть змогу підвищити обсяги реалізації продукції. З іншого боку в аптеки є слабкі сторони, занедбання яких загрожує втратою конкурентоспроможності, зниженням ефективності діяльності та витісненням з ринку. Проаналізовані основні проблеми в організації маркетингу та розроблені заходи із вдосконалення комплексу маркетингу ТОВ "Елінайт". Серед них: впровадження комплексної управлінської інформаційної системи на базі SOSTAC; персоніфікація відносини із замовниками за допомогою маркетингової концепції one-to-one; зміна планування бюджету на маркетингові заходи, обов'язкове проведення самостійних PR- та промоушен-кампаній на рівні аптечного закладу тощо.

**Ключові слова:** маркетинг, аптечний заклад, управління маркетинговою діяльністю, фармацевтичний ринок, фармацевтичний маркетинг.

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