

Marketing plan of a private institution of higher secondary education in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco

Plan de mercadotecnia: De una institución privada de nivel Medio Superior, en Villahermosa Tabasco

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Abstract

The objective of this work is to develop a marketing plan in order to improve the productivity and market positioning of a private institution of higher secondary education, located in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco. The marketing plan aims to increase student enrollment and improve the financial situation of the institution. The methodology used was a mixed methodology, since qualitative and quantitative data were used. Carrying out this work will help other institutions of this type to create and implement their own marketing plans to improve their positioning in the market.

Resumen

El objetivo de este trabajo es elaborar un plan de mercadotecnia con el fin de mejorar la productividad y el posicionamiento en el mercado de una institución privada de educación media superior, ubicada en la ciudad de Villahermosa, Tabasco. Mediante el plan de mercadotecnia se pretende incrementar la matrícula de alumnos y mejorar la situación financiera de la institución. La metodología utilizada fue una metodología mixta, ya que se utilizaron datos cualitativos y cuantitativos. Con la realización de este trabajo se contribuirá a que las demás instituciones de este tipo puedan crear e implementar sus propios planes de mercadotecnia para mejorar su posicionamiento en el mercado.

Marketing, Institution, Positioning

Mercadotecnia, Institución, Posicionamiento

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Introduction

The present project of a marketing plan was designed for a private institution of higher secondary education in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco, in order to increase the enrolment of students in the school system incorporated to COBATAB (Colegio de Bachilleres de Tabasco), and in the technological system incorporated to DGETI (Dirección General de Educación Tecnológica Industrial). To achieve this, an external and internal analysis of the organisation will be carried out. In the external factors we will analyse the market, the environment, the competition and how the economic, political, cultural, social and technological variables impact positively and negatively on the organisation. In the internal factors, we will analyse whether certain deficiencies in the administration have a negative impact on the organisation's image and, therefore, on attracting more students, and we will analyse the organisation's strengths that have allowed it to remain in the private education market for more than 30 years.

Once the threats, opportunities, weaknesses and strengths have been analysed, we will proceed to carry out a SWOT study in order to correct the weaknesses, address the threats, maintain the strengths and take advantage of the opportunities.

Marketing plan for a private institution of higher secondary education in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco:

- Introduction.
- Background of the institution.
- Situation analysis.
- Objectives.
- Strategy development and definition.
- Action plan.
- Budget.
- Control system.
- Annexes.
- Conclusion and recommendations.

- Bibliography.

Methodology to be developed

An analysis of the current situation of the institution was carried out by means of a SWOT analysis, in order to know the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the institution.

The analysis of the situation is the initial phase of any marketing plan in which all the factors that positively and negatively affect the organization must be analyzed, always starting with the external analysis and then the internal analysis.

External analysis

Threats

- High competition
- Non-payment culture in certain sectors of the Tabasco population.
- In the semi-school system, due to the very nature of the people who enter this system, there is a very high percentage of student desertion.
- The extreme overcrowding that the government allows in public schools affects enrolment in private institutions.

Opportunities

- Large potential market.
- Increase of the population of Tabasco decade by decade.
- With the system of online classes, the possibility of reaching a market outside the state opens up.
- The growth of ICTs in Mexico benefits the institutions in the growth of their demand.
- Availability of facilities for new lines of business.

*Internal analysis***Weaknesses**

- The facilities where the high school is located are not owned by the institution, the building is rented.
- Lack of green spaces or sports facilities in the building.
- Currently there is a low enrolment of students in the school system.
- Lack of parking
- Low income due to low enrolment.
- The technological semi-school system is not 100% owned by the institution.

Strengths

- Excellent location of the school facilities
- Currently has a well-equipped chemistry laboratory.
- Currently has a well-equipped computer centre.
- Teachers with many years of experience and who are proficient in the subject they teach.
- The institution is well positioned in the market for its academic quality.
- Affordable tuition fees compared to the competition.

Results

Once the SWOT analysis has been carried out, we proceed to the analysis of the following results.

Analysis of external threats

Currently in the state of Tabasco, there are many private institutions at all levels of education, and there is not enough demand, so some of them have had to close.

According to state government data (Table 1), during the 2022-2023 school year in Tabasco there are a total of 375 higher secondary education institutions, of which 81 are private (21.6% of Tabasco's high schools are private) and 294 are funded by some level of government.

There is a student population of 116769 students, of which 7% (8115 students) are enrolled in private institutions and 93% (108654 students) are enrolled in public institutions. Analysing the data provided above, we realise that the population willing to pay for private educational services is small according to the supply. Assuming that upper secondary students enrolled in private institutions were divided equally among all private institutions, each private high school would have 100 students, which would make it very difficult for many private upper secondary institutions to stay in the market.

Another factor to consider is the delinquency of certain sectors of the population. Some sectors of the population have a culture of non-payment or late payment. In the case of private upper secondary education institutions, many of the students enrolled are late in paying their tuition fees, which in the long run causes them to accumulate several monthly payments and they end up dropping out of school. This cultural factor affects both systems (school-based and semi-school-based) in the private upper secondary education institution in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco. This cultural factor is very marked in the semi-school system. Most of the people enrolled in this system are people over 20 years old, who did not finish high school in due time, therefore, they are usually people from low social strata, with low level of responsibility and jobs with very low incomes, which causes a very high student dropout rate, for example, there have been cases where they start groups of 30 students and have not even finished the first term and 10 students have already dropped out.

The political factor also plays a role. Currently in the state of Tabasco, the state government allows extreme overcrowding in public high schools (bachillerates and federal institutions), which reduces the market for private high schools, since many parents prefer to have their children in classrooms of 60 students or more, instead of paying for a public school where they would receive a better education and a more personalised treatment.

Analysis of opportunities

According to data from the government of the state of Tabasco, there is a population of 134,160 young people who are studying high school in the school period 2022-2023 (table 1), once all these young people finish high school they become a target market for private institutions of higher secondary education in the state, either for the school-based or semi-school-based system. In Annex 1 we can also see that there are currently 116769 students studying high school, which is a very large potential market. If a small percentage of the current population of high school students could be enrolled, the opportunities for growth could be enormous.

Another important fact to consider is the steady growth of Tabasco's population. According to INEGI data (graph 1), Tabasco has shown a clear upward trend in total population from 1900 to 2020. In annex 2, we can see that in 1930 the population of Tabasco was barely 0.2 million inhabitants, 20 years later (in 1950) the population had already doubled, reaching a total of 0.4 million inhabitants. Fifty years later (in the year 2000) the population of Tabasco had already reached 1.9 million inhabitants, which represents a population increase of 375% compared to 1950. Today, population growth is no longer as rapid as it was 50 years ago, but the total population will continue to grow, and with it, the market for private educational institutions.

With the worldwide pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus, which started in 2020, many shops and places where many people gathered, including schools, were closed all over Mexico. The phenomenon of the pandemic combined with the growth of ICTs in Mexico gave way to online classes, through the internet and an electronic device (computer, mobile phone, Tablet, etc.).

To continue with the teaching process for students, classes were implemented using online platforms such as zoom, Google meets, Microsoft teams, etc. Online teaching allows the flexibility to offer educational services anywhere and at any time. Today, with the major negative effects of the covid-19 pandemic behind us, online classes are still widely used and have enabled educational institutions to reach markets beyond their physical facilities. The reach of the private higher secondary education institution in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco, would be enormous if it were able to position itself in cities outside of Villahermosa. This opportunity is especially for the semi-school system, since classes in this system are held only once a week.

Another great opportunity is that there is enough space in the facilities to set up new lines of business. Strategic alliances can be sought with other schools to implement new educational offerings or diploma courses in different areas of knowledge.

Analysis of weaknesses

The facilities where the high school is located are not owned by the company; the building is rented, which means that a large part of the income is spent on rent. A monthly rent of \$50 000 mxn is currently paid, due to the size of the building and its location. Another factor to take into account is the building, as it is an enclosed building, there are no outdoor areas or sports facilities such as courts, football fields, etc. Some students, especially in the school system, do not like this. Some years ago, this was solved by letting students out into the light zone during the break, but this had the problem that many students did not return to their classes, so the decision was taken to restrict the students' access to the light zone during the break.

We must also take into consideration the low enrolment. There is currently a student population of 85 students in the school system and 120 in the semi-school system. This is a very low number of students compared to previous years.

However, low enrolment is a problem that has recently hit all private education institutions. In the private institution of higher secondary education in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco, it has caused major problems due to the high operating costs of paying rent for the building. The covid-19 pandemic had a direct impact on the number of students enrolled in both systems (school-based and semi-school-based), and there is still no recovery from this event.

Another factor that impacts on the institution's income is that the semi-school system offered (weekend classes only) is not 100% owned by the institution. For each student enrolled in this system, a monthly fee of \$350 mxn per month has to be paid to DGTI, which means that a large part of the income from the semi-school system does not end up within the institution.

All the factors mentioned above, together with the low income due to low student enrolment, mean that the institution is just above the break-even point economically speaking, which means that it has little room for manoeuvre to invest in other aspects, for example, in a comprehensive marketing plan to improve its market positioning.

Strengths analysis

The school facilities are located in one of the most important areas of the city of Villahermosa, in the historic centre or "zona luz". It is the oldest part of Villahermosa, an area closed to vehicular traffic where the visitor can find different types of commercial establishments, restaurants and hotels. One of the most representative parts is Juarez Street, which is where the high school facilities are located. The aforementioned area has a great influx of people at all hours. This makes it an area suitable for commerce and for attracting new clients. Likewise, the school facilities are equipped with a chemistry laboratory and a computer laboratory, audio-visual rooms (equipped with projector and speakers) and comfortable classrooms for the well-being of the students.

The teachers at the school are people with many years of experience and extensive knowledge in the subjects they teach, resulting in a good academic preparation of the students. During the years of service of the educational institution there have been outstanding students with very good grades. Due to the good academic level, it is very common for former students to bring their acquaintances, friends and relatives to enrol in the high school. We can say that most of them are satisfied customers and come back to require the educational services.

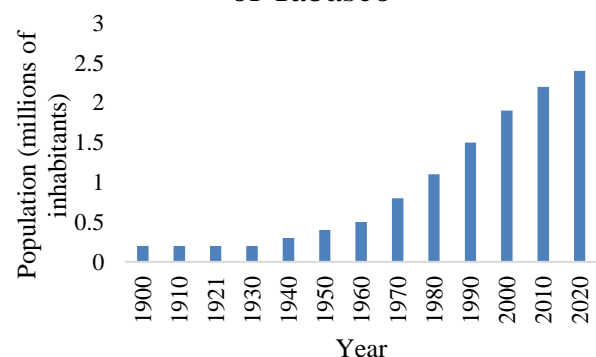
The educational institution has been in the market for more than 30 years and thousands of students have graduated during the time of service, which makes the high school already known and has a certain position in the market.

Tuition fees are quite affordable compared to other public schools operating in the state of Tabasco.

As a result of the analysis, it is determined that the school lacks a well-defined marketing structure, so it is necessary to implement marketing strategies to improve competitiveness.

Annexes

Population growth in the state of Tabasco



Graphic 1 Population growth in the state of Tabasco

Source: INEGI (National Institute of Statistics and Geography)

Students, teachers, groups and schools in the state education system by service and level. Start of school year 2022-2023		
Service and level	Students	School
School-based and non-formal education services	740 631	5 646
Initiala	4 249	156
Preschool	105 905	2 051
Primary	278 171	2 094
Secondary	134 160	852
Basic education	522 485	5 153
Upper secondary	116 769	375
Higher	101 107	118
Service and level	Students	School
Other educational services	55 583	364
Special	25 778	200
Training for workb	29 805	164

Table 1 Students, teachers, groups and schools in the state education system by service and level. Beginning of school year 2022-2023

Source: Basic statistics of the state education system

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Conclusions

The situation for public schools in the city of Villahermosa, Tabasco is somewhat complicated at present. Full recovery from the negative effects caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has not yet been achieved. It is because of this situation that a well-structured marketing plan becomes more relevant.

The school has a weak marketing and promotion structure, which means that the market is not aware of the quality of study offered. The way in which the school currently recruits students is mostly receptive, where the users are the ones who come to the school to seek information about the educational offerings. In general, the school does not have well-defined strategies for sales promotion, media, public relations and an eye-catching design of the Facebook page to publicise the services digitally.

It is essential that the school implements well-defined marketing strategies in order to increase market positioning. Therefore, it is recommended that the strategies and action plan outlined in this paper be implemented to increase student enrolment and improve the school's position.

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