

# STRATEGIC STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CULTURAL- RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Nicoleta POPESCU (SPÂRCHEZ)

*The Academy of Economic Studies in Bucharest, Romania*

## ABSTRACT

**Paper purpose** –In the activities related to developing a good service one must take into account five elements which are essential for the development of any strategy: promotion, price, service, investment, staff. This is the reason for which the main objective of this research refers to determining the main of the possibilities to improve the sustainable development for the cultural-religious services.

**Approach/method** – Microeconomic and macroeconomic change is a process which is not simple to coordinate and which requires major risk-taking. Recently it was noticed that the globalization phenomenon caused more rapid, complex and extensive changes. Human, cultural and religious dimensions are essential for what change requires.

**Findings** – This approach gives the possibility of elaborating certain strategies for emergent situations which could give the possibility: to discover new fields (new markets, new products, new technologies) and to provide an environment which facilitates combining various persons (with broad and varied culture, experience and studies).

**Originality/value** –This is the why this approach included the role of man and, of course, of society in the performance of educative, religious and cultural activities.

**Keywords** – strategy, sustainability, service, culture, religion.

**JEL Classification** – M 31, I25, C4, L17, M14, O15

**Paper type** –General review

## Introduction

In regard to the activities related to the development and diversification of services, it is very important on the long term to consider culture and religion as defining elements for the sustainable development of services, in the context of a deep and permanent change of the globalization process.

Strategic changes require extensive changes of the vision, mission and objectives, which will influence all or most of the activities performed until now. In such situations, the traditional stability will gain a new meaning of organizational balance. Human, cultural and religious dimensions are essential for what change requires.

## **HOLISTICA Journal of Business and Public Administration**

### **No. 3/2015**

During the last period, sustainable development was more and more discussed and implicitly the sustainable development of services in the context of globalization.

Even from the oldest times, the man was concerned and forced to carry out various activities in order to earn one's living. This context allows the observation that, along with the man's banishment from Eden, "So the LORD God sent him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken" (Genesis: Chap. 3, 23) (The Bible, 2005, 14), the pain he takes in providing for him and his family is emphasized.

The individual's importance in society is reflected through a series of inventions having the purpose to help him lessen one's efforts in view of carrying out an activity. Therefore, a series of discoveries were made (Invented by whom?, 2013-2015, website): *household objects, IT, communications, education, constructions, electronics, fashion and clothing, music and art, medicine, sports, technology.*

#### **Marketing and sustainability**

Training and educating the young generation must consider the rapid progress and evolution achieved in different activity domains, as a result of the development of the economy of knowledge. In the same time, in this context of evolution and progress, one must notice an everlasting interest for those aspects specific to the sustainable development. From this point of view, one may notice life principles and long-standing values.

In these activity domains, specific for a sustainable development, the knowledge, information and education play a special role. By means of education, certain information are passed down to younger generations, at the basis of which stands a series of principles regarding the sustainability, important mainly because it insures the necessary training and education environment for the children, in the spirit of observing and promoting the human, spiritual but also environmental related values. Innovations in IT lead to creating software applications able to ensure far more reliable and user-friendly options in what concerns gathering and acquiring information. Thus, one can notice that the issue of information gathering is no longer on the map, as it is outran by mass-use of computer, and the greatest concern nowadays, of the globalization, puts an accent on the manner in which the information is used.

Concerning the quantity of information and the manner in which it is interpreted, one can argue another tendency: *"Children are confused because of the volume of information they must process and don't have the abilities necessary for sorting out information and taking decisions. In the same time, the traditional teaching methods used in schools become less attractive as years go by, the children having alternatives for finding information they need with the help of the internet and other educational materials on electronic support."* (Foundation for Civil Society Development, 2009, 11).

**HOLISTICA Journal of Business and Public Administration**  
**No. 3/2015**

The importance of the children's emergent needs is reflected by the values and role models in permanent change, by the manner in which the information is used and the new generations are thought. For this, the study performed by World Vision Romania must be noticed: "*The child. Wellbeing in Rural Romania*", studying a series of issues, including those with reference to the children's school activities and the parents' involvement in home assignment verification, but also school meetings attendance. Taking into account both aspects, the happiness index was determined, whose level is available for study in the table below:

Table no. 1 - Happiness index

Issues subject to research	Response category	Happiness index (%)					
		Very low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Total
Home assignment verification by household members	no	30,40	24,50	16,30	15,10	9,90	14,30
	yes	69,60	75,50	83,70	84,90	90,10	85,70
Attending meetings	no	42,90	45,70	25,70	23,00	14,90	22,30
	yes	57,10	54,30	74,30	77,00	85,10	77,70

Source: World Vision Romania, "*The child. Wellbeing in Rural Romania*", taken from:

[http://www.worldvision.ro/\\_downloads/allgemein/Raport\\_Bunastarea\\_copilului\\_din\\_mediul\\_rural.pdf](http://www.worldvision.ro/_downloads/allgemein/Raport_Bunastarea_copilului_din_mediul_rural.pdf), consulted on 26/02/2015;

In what concerns the marketing, the strategic one represents a special interest for this approach.

The concept of strategy comes from the military domain and the most recent definition published in The Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (2002 edition) draws attention on certain essential activities of: planning, organization and leading of military operations in a war (Romanian Academy, 2009). This notion includes as well in its meaning "the development of operations and manoeuvres performed in order to acquire a victory" (Romanian Academy, 2009).

**The activity phases of strategic planning**

In what concerns the strategy, one can be notice that it is an essential step in the planning process. Thus, the following steps shall be taken in order to carry out a planning activity (Stănciou, 2000, 80):

*A. PEST analysis*, in which one shall be perform an analysis of: the macroenvironment (Stănciou, 2000, 32) (political, natural, socio-cultural, technological, demographical and economical) and of microenvironment (Stănciou, 2000, 32) (competitors, clients, suppliers and intermediaries). For Romania, the four PEST components can be briefly developed as such:

- the political factor is important for determining the legal frame ensuring the development in adequate conditions of activities in various domains;
- the economical factor can be reflected by many aspects agreed upon at a macroeconomic level. The gross domestic product is an essential element reflecting a country's productivity. In 2012, in Romania, the value of all goods and services coming from the production process within the national economy (Băcescu and Băcescu – Cărbunaru, 1998, 56) was of Lei 586.749.900.000 (The National Institute of Statistics, 2013, 353). Regarding the consumer's price indexes, in 2012, as opposed to 2013, it was registered a growth to 103,33% (The National Institute of Statistics, 2013, 332).
- the social factor can be analyzed from a religious perspective. One can therefore note, in conformity with the census of population carried out in 2012 that the majority of the population is Orthodox representing 81.042 percent from the entire Romanian population (The National Institute of Statistics - webesait, 1998-2015).
- the technological factor is of significance for the destiny of the humanity, as great discoveries are the ones influencing the progress of a nation. For this, the importance of the human capital and their level of education are predominant. In Romania, in the educational year 2011/2012, from the total number of graduates, a percentage 25.5% 000 (The National Institute of Statistics, 2013, 274) was registered, afferent to higher education.

*B. SWOT analysis*, out of which one distinguished (Plumb, Zamfir, Ionescu and Ionescu, 2004, 92):

a) for the internal organizational environment:

- of strong points: the existence of historical, religious and cultural edifices and their distinctive features, the existence of religious and cultural traditions, national languages used within the country's borders, observance of the moral principles stating the good and the truth, the existence of museums under aegis of churches, existence of religious choruses, of a great number of believers and disciples affiliated to a religious cult, national and regional programs for culture, religion and education,

**HOLISTICA Journal of Business and Public Administration**  
**No. 3/2015**

the existence of confessional education, a great number of persons specialized in the theological domain;

- of weak points: existence, at a national level, of a rather small number of persons specialized in architecture, archaeology, arts, constructions (The Directorate for Culture Valcea, webesait), assignation of limited and insufficient funds for activities of priority in the cultural and religious domain (protection, preservation, restoration and promotion of cultural and religious values), absence of proper education in the domain (pro cultural and religious values), lack of systematic preoccupations concerning the promotion of cultural and religious values and stimulation of their potential as a factor of growth of the quality of life., non-existence of approaches and preoccupations between sectors concerning the cultural and religious values, existence of extremely varied approaches at a national level concerning different value patterns and role models, representative for certain activity domains, impossibility of providing for adequate spaces in educational units during summer time (because of sanitary and rehabilitation works, and of admission or graduation exams organized), the small number of teachers and trained personnel willing to participate, in their free time, pro bono, for a couple of hours weekly, in order to perform such activities;

b) for the external organizational environment (macro and microenvironment):

- opportunities: the potential for development of cultural-religious services, establishing a new segment having as main objective the children, the existence of locations the cult units dispose of (both in the rural and urban environment) which could be temporarily equipped for organizing activities dedicated to children, the ability of older children in what concerns the selection and communication of accurate information to children from younger generations, the existence of POSDRU European Funds, the existence of a legislation concerning the trainers, the existence of a legislation concerning the minor children, existence of those children who must be helped in acquiring the capacity of selection (of what is good and beneficial from what is bad and must be removed), implanting an exemplary behaviour as of school;

- threats: existence of summer schools, establishing different priorities for the children's free time, parent's lack of interest in regard to various educational forms for the free time (in weekend and holidays), existence of camps, of modern socialization techniques (internet), of modern communication and information techniques (TV, internet and phone), existence of clubs, parent's lack of interest or possibility to ensure those resources necessary for involving children in different activities, the financial risk, lowered birth rate, limited time the parents have for educating and training their children, parent's lack of possibility to approach from their level of knowledge different area of expertise.

C. *Establishing strategic objectives* (according to Ansoff matrix- Diagram no. 5.1) (Stănciou, 2000, 86), one must take into consideration, for the service to be

**HOLISTICA Journal of Business and Public Administration**  
**No. 3/2015**

created, that balance must be determined and maintained between the service portfolio and parishioners acting as users.

Diagram 1. Ansoff Matrix (product - market)

Market	Product		
		Existent	New
	Existent	Reaching the community	Development of the product
	New	Development of community	Diversification

*Source:* Ansoff, H.I., The New Corporate Strategy, John Wilonsm New York, 1988, taken from: Aurelia-Felicia Stănciou, Strategii de marketing în turism (Tourism Marketing Strategies), Economic Publishing House, Bucharest 2000, p. 86

Taking into consideration the four quadrants shown previously, concerning the main strategic objectives, as a general rule for the services provided by the Church, the following main tactical decisions can be noted:

- The Community Reaching Strategy involves taking decisions in order to attract new parishioners in addition to those existent, taking into account the products and services already in the portfolio (Bişa et All, 2005, p.260);
- The Community Development Strategy considers developing in new geographical areas or targeting new segments of parishioners (Aurelia- Stănciou, 2000, 86). This strategy shall be used in creating the new cultural-religious educational service. In this context, from a strategic point of view, the objectives that can be found in the table below shall be recommended:

Table no. 2 - Strategic objectives for the development of a cultural-religious educational service

No.	Objectives	Indicator	Years		
			N	N+1	
1.	Attracting a significant number of children to take part in the activities initiated by this service	No. of children	200	200	
2.	Knowledge acquired in the approaches	Grades	Fail	0%	0%
			Pass	10%	10%
			Credit	60%	60%
			Distinction	30%	30%

*Source:* Table drawn up by the author

- The Product Development Strategy has as purpose to profit from a series of opportunities which are visible within other communities, taking into account the already existing parishioners (Bişa et All, 2005, 260);
- The Diversification Strategy concerns the possibility to have a maximum capacity of retail for new products and services within new communities (Bişa et All, 2005, 261);
- The Consolidation Strategy (Bişa et All, 2005, 261) implies maintaining the positions inside communities where the religious units have already reached. These already existing communities can be emerging, fully developed or in decline. Depending on each situation, other possibilities must be considered, respectively for the growth of the influence the cult is holding within a community, of stressing certain particularities by means of the quality of the products and services, the reduction of costs and reinforcement of the marketing activities and/or maximum development of the potential;
- Strategic Withdrawal (Bişa et All, 2005, 261) is recommended when one wants to avoid certain losses which might be generated by conflicts and implies the transfer of the property right on the products, services, assets or on the entire activity towards other religious units.

*D. Strategy elaboration* is the phase in which objectives are approached by taking into consideration the five elements of the marketing mix (Stănciou, 2000, 117): product/services policies, price policies, distribution policies, advertising policies and also those concerning the staff. These concepts shall be developed within the methodology used for creating the new service.

*E. Plan and/or program elaboration* which can take the following forms (Emilian, 2000, 134-135): technical and economic planning (determining the quantitative and qualitative indicators for the new duties), operative planning or scheduling the activity (work plans and program elaboration for a short period of time – day, decade, month – using the Gantt, PERT, CPM methods). The relevance of these concepts in this study shall be noticed by means of the results and importance of the cultural-religious educational service;

*F. Evaluation and control of meeting the established strategic objectives*

In taking decisions and enunciating policies, a special place is taken (Emilian, 2000, 107) by short-term previsions (for maximum one year), medium-term previsions (for a period of up to five years) and long-term previsions (for a period of more than five years). In this case, a service imagined and developed for a period of two years is suggested, so that structural funds could be used to create it.



### **Conclusions**

The suggested service, a cultural-religious educational service, is a new concept having in view to meet a series of needs by approaching the three services (cultural, religious and educational) in a new way. In this case, the most important strategic objectives are for development of the new cultural-religious educational service in already existing communities represented by the users of the three services (cultural, religious and educational) that have been approached separately until now or have been grouped two by two, and for diversification for attracting new consumers who did not use in the past, under any form, the three services composing this recommended service

### **References**

- Stănciou, A. F. (2000), *Strategii de marketing în turism (Tourism Marketing Strategies)*, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Bișa, C. et Al (2005), *Elaborarea studiilor de fezabilitate și a planurilor de afacere (Development of Feasibility Studies and Business Plans)*, BMT Publishing House.
- Foundation for Civil Society Development, *Emerging needs of children in Romania* (2009), p. 11, taken from: [https://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/5914/prj/Studiu\\_-\\_Nevoi\\_emergente\\_ale\\_copiilor\\_din\\_Romania.pdf](https://www.adam-europe.eu/prj/5914/prj/Studiu_-_Nevoi_emergente_ale_copiilor_din_Romania.pdf), consulted on 11/06/2013.
- Invented by whom? (2013-2015), taken from: <http://www.cineainventat.ro>, consulted on 23/11/2014.
- Plumb, I., Zamfir, A., Ionescu, M., Ionescu S. (2004), *Reingineria Serviciilor (Services Reengineering)*, ASE Publishing House, Bucharest.
- Băcescu, M., Băcescu, A. C. (1998), “*Macroeconomie și Politici Macroeconomice (Macroeconomics and Macroeconomic Policies)*”, All Educational Publishing House, Bucharest.
- The Directorate for Culture Valcea, *Vâlcea Cultural Strategy (2008-2013) - proiect*, taken from: <http://www.valcea.djc.ro/DocumenteHtml.aspx?ID=1944>, consulted on 21/08/2013.
- The Bible (2005), Publishing House of the Biblical and Mission Institute of the Romanian Orthodox Church, Bucharest.
- The National Institute of Statistics – webewsait (1998-2015) , 2011 Population and Housing Census, taken from: <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/> consulted on 01/08/2014.
- The National Institute of Statistics, 2013 Yearbook, CD format.
- The Romanian Academy, “Iorgu and Iordan” Institute of Linguistics, taken from: <http://dexonline.ro/definitie/strategie>, consulted on 10/04/2013.