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## Features of digital marketing to promote educational products

## KEYWORDS

educational product,  
digital marketing,  
target audience,  
online course,  
commercial model,  
practice-oriented learning



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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction.** Nowadays, digital marketing is crucial for successfully promoting educational products. The increasing number of academic offers (educational products) on the market requires standing out among competitors, and effective digital marketing strategies help attract the target audience and increase brand recognition.

*The article aims to develop an educational product and substantiate its competitive advantages.*

**Materials and Methods.** The materials included articles from periodical peer-reviewed journals and websites of training centers such as GeekBrains, Labor Formula, INTUIT, Budget, and others.

**Results.** The essence of the project was to develop an online course ‘How to Get a Job’ and to prepare for a job interview. Distinctive characteristics of the course were as follows: speaking in simple terms on complex concepts, practice-oriented approach, affordability, informing the target audience about the possibility of training at the expense of the federal project ‘Employment Assistance’ aimed to help citizens increase their demand in the labor market.

**Conclusion.** Developing a course, considering the peculiarities of adult learning is essential. Problem-based learning develops interest in professional issues and improves communicative competencies, which will increase the demand in the labor market.

## FOR CITATION

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Studying digital marketing to promote educational products is relevant due to increasing popularity of online courses and educational platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, and others. With the growing number of educational offers (educational products) in the market, it is essential to stand out among competitors. Effective digital marketing strategies help capture the target audience's attention and increase brand awareness. Social media platforms are also becoming important channels for promoting educational products – the ability to create quality content and interact with the audience is becoming a key skill. Digital marketing allows educational institutions to reach international markets, opening up new opportunities to attract students from different countries.

Thus, learning digital marketing is essential to successfully promoting educational products in today's world.

### ***Literature Review***

An educational product is “a specific form of educational service, adapted to the relevant market segment and capable of satisfying the subject's need related to acquisition of new competencies” [1]. The market characteristics of an educational product are target audience, needs, market potential, and competitive advantages.

According to N. Askarbekuly et al., creating educational software products has two aspects: software engineering and educational design [2]. I. Rudinskiy et al. substantiate the necessity of introducing the concept of educational engineering into education. Moreover, the authors suggested the idea of educational engineering, which is based on the categories ‘Educational product’ and ‘Life cycle of an educational product’ and includes a system of principles for implementing the engineering approach to creating such products [3]. However, as J. Lu et al. note, the last 20 years offer few studies that consider pedagogical and sociocultural aspects of usability of educational technologies and products [4].

According to N. P. Krylova and E. N. Levashov, the high level of competition among online educational platforms has significant prospects for further active development of the market of such services. The authors note that the main advantages of using electronic educational platforms are convenience, the ability to repeatedly listen to the material and lectures by leading Russian and foreign universities teachers, and security (no risk of virus threat). According to the authors, most surveyed students express a positive or neutral attitude toward using e-learning platforms compared to the beginning of the pandemic (March-April 2020); most respondents demonstrate productive behavior and sufficient self-regulation [5].

Yu. A. Shcheglov and I. A. Soboleva consider the issues of creating new products in the sphere of educational services, namely, the model of market value development, on the basis of which the tasks of product prototyping, market sample realization, and development of a marketing program for product promotion in the target market are solved [6].

The teacher is integral to successfully realizing an educational product, and their role cannot be underestimated.

According to R. Pardiyono et al., place, product, price, and promotion positively impact external marketing, and people and processes positively impact internal marketing. In other words, an external marketing policy is to be applied to attract students' potential interest, and an internal marketing policy is to be applied to improve the quality of its services [7].

N. Kalenskaya et al. note that a modern university urgently needs highly qualified teaching staff who can quickly adapt to new educational standards, accept changes, and create quality educational products. A systematic approach to integrated development of teaching resources by the criteria of the modern education system and differentiated requirements for the quality of education for all segments of consumers is necessary [8].

Thus, promotion of educational products is needed as, despite the growing popularity of digital marketing, systematic research that analyzes the effectiveness of different strategies for this purpose is lacking. Notably, digital marketing is constantly evolving, with new tools and platforms emerging rapidly, and this creates challenges in exploring and adapting existing theories and models to new contexts.

Educational products can target different user groups (students, professionals, companies, etc.) with unique needs and preferences. This requires a deep understanding of market segmentation, and customized approaches.

Consumer habits and preferences change due to various factors such as social media, reviews, and testimonials. Investigating how these changes affect the decision-making for purchasing educational products is necessary.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The material used for the paper included articles from periodical peer-reviewed journals such as Educational Technology Research and Development, Scientific and Technical Information Processing, Decision Science Letters, Procedia Economics and Finance, Education and Information Technologies, and others.

For the analysis of competitors' services, we used the websites of training centers GeekBrains, Labor Formula, INTUIT, Budget, and others.

Besides, we used specialized literature on digital marketing, which covers SEO, content marketing, SMM, Email marketing, and other aspects.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

The project is to develop an online course 'How to Get a Job' (without being territory-specific) to prepare for a job interview with the following contents: video lectures (overviews) indicating the order of practical tasks and webinars on key issues of organizing remuneration and labor rationing.

This educational product has the following objective: the university fulfilling the indicators of the Priority-2030 program and professional self-realization. Online courses are available for those looking for a job and ready to learn new things in a new way. In our opinion, these are:

- urban residents aged 20-40 with an income below the average;
- people whose education qualifies them to apply for a job in the field of labor;
- people restarting professional activity after paternity leave, cessation of entrepreneurial activity, or retirement (including military pensioners);
- people wishing to obtain a certificate of additional professional education to increase competitiveness in the labor market;
- people seeking to actualize their professional skills 'easily and quickly';
- people seeking employment after graduation from a higher or secondary vocational institution;
- people preparing for a job interview.

Difficulties of the target audience:

- little or no work experience;
- 'career pause' due to family or other circumstances;
- previous activity not labor-related.

Table 1, which presents data on market offerings, shows that competitors are focused on professionals. The free training material includes tests but no practical assignments.

Table 1

## Competing solutions (excerpt)

Name	Pros	Minuses	Cost
Labor formula <a href="https://formula-truda.ru/">https://formula-truda.ru/</a> Covers the RF and CIS	methods are tested on the management consulting market since 2012, convenient website, necessary templates, practical homework, individual consultations	High cost; fines for leaking training materials to the Internet (5,000,000 RUR) and for transferring access to third parties (300,000 RUR)	16,900 RUR for 30-day individual access; checking 4 test assignments
FinCont Training Center <a href="https://www.finkont.ru/">https://www.finkont.ru/</a> Covers the RF and CIS	12 years of experience, user-friendly website, online consultant, methodological material, coffee breaks, online broadcast	High cost	41,800 RUR (7% discount if paid a month in advance) for 32 hours
Scientific and Technical Information Center 'Progress' <a href="https://www.cntiprogess.ru/">https://www.cntiprogess.ru/</a> Covers the RF and CIS	25 years of experience, extensive list, a set of information and reference materials, corporate format from 8 people, lecturers are engineers and standardizes of leading Russian enterprises (online broadcasting)	High cost	46,000 RUR (+3000 RUR for a certificate in English) for 32 hours; 5-10% discount
National Open University 'INTUIT' <a href="https://intuit.ru/">https://intuit.ru/</a> Covers the RF and CIS	License since 2016, official documents, free access to training materials	Registration is required to take the tests and pass the exam	Free of charge
Training Center 'Budget' <a href="https://lpay.budget-edu.ru/">https://lpay.budget-edu.ru/</a> Covers the RF	12 years of work in the public sector, professional publications, federal experts, convenient format, access to content after training	High cost	24,500 RUR for 84 hours (modular)

Sources: [10-14]

As an informal competitor of educational product, we should consider self-preparation for the interview, the main disadvantage is the lack of feedback. It is possible for some potential clients, first of all, to profile graduates from last year. For those who plan to change their activity profile and return to the profession after a long break from work, such opportunities are limited. The conditions for developing professional competence are planned to be realized based on a practice-oriented approach, systematic training with a focus on practice, and practicing actual skills for use here and now.

Self-preparation for an interview (the main drawback being lack of feedback) should be considered an informal competitor of the educational product. It is possible for some potential

clients, primarily, graduates of the last year of relevant fields. For those who plan to change their field of activity or to return to the profession after a long pause, such opportunities are limited. Creating conditions for professional competence development is to be implemented on the basis of a practice-oriented approach, systemic training with an emphasis on practice, and development of relevant skills for use here and now.

The approximate period of mastering the 36-hour course 'How to Get a Job' is one week. The cost of the online format, as calculated by the University's planning and economic department based on 100 people per year, is 2,700 RUR, 4,100 RUR with two webinars upon request. According to the entrance test, each student is assigned 6-10 practical tasks from the set; fulfilling these is required to obtain a certificate. Distinctive characteristics of the course were as follows: speaking in simple terms on complex concepts, practice-oriented approach, affordability, informing the target audience about the possibility of training at the expense of the federal project 'Employment Assistance' aimed to help citizens increase their demand in the labor market. A range of expectations was established to differentiate clients' needs, including three meaningful levels: Base, Norm, and Super (see Table 2).

**Table 2**

Range of clients' expectations from the educational product

Base	Norm	Super
Availability of education to qualify for a job in the labor field	Convenient format	+ certificate in English
Willingness to successfully pass the interview	Set of information and reference materials	Modular course (basic + advanced level)
Understanding that having a certificate of specialized additional professional education increases the chances of being invited for an interview	Generally pro-oriented	Individual consultations
I need to update my hard skills.	Expert practitioners are involved in content creation	Discounts for the next course
Simple presentation of complex issues	High cost, discount system	Assistance in getting free access to the course with funds from the federal project 'Employment Promotion'
No time for offline self-study	Access to content after completion of training	Informing about the availability of profile vacancy
Need to get an independent assessment of readiness for an interview	Experience in the market of additional professional education for more than 5 years	Recommending best graduates to potential employers
Practical value of the content	Good feedback from trainees	Technical support for trainees 24/7
Course affordability	Reputation for integrity	Ability to communicate during the training period
Willingness to learn using distance technologies	Availability of corporate format	Recording of an interview with the deputy head of the Labor and Wages Department of the city-forming enterprise – a department graduate about the employer's expectations from candidates for vacancies in the field of labor

Table 3 lists key risks for the project and expected actions to reduce those.

**Table 3**

Key risks for the project

Risk	How to reduce
Economic: not getting the required number of students; not breaking even	Advertising and promotion
Pedagogical: audience not used to learning this way; audience shows no trust in the format, etc.	Instructions about the format of the work; Instructions for different tasks and situations
Temporal: being late to make the right decision and to take action	Planning the training schedule; Providing for a time margin
Value: audience is not aware of the course and/or of its particular features and benefits	Advertising; Direct interaction with the target audience

Launch Plan:

- Webinar + Landing Page;
- Selection of practical tasks of different complexity levels;
- Course script development;
- Proper distribution of assignments to keep interest in training.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The prospects for digital marketing to promote educational products are up and coming. These are related to personalization, i.e., more precise (targeted) offers for different audience segments, which can be effectuated by using artificial intelligence, i.e., in analyzing large amounts of data on user behavior, which allows predicting their needs and preferences.

With the increasing use of mobile devices, marketing of educational products will increasingly focus on mobile platforms. Social media also continues to be an essential tool for promoting educational products.

Virtual and augmented reality technologies can also create interactive and engaging educational content, significantly increasing interest in products and improving the learning experience.

We chose a focus strategy based on the needs and expectations of customers and the competitive advantages of the educational product being created, which implies concentration of activities on a limited market. When designing a course, it is essential to consider the peculiarities of adult learning, since problem-based learning develops interest in professional issues and improves communicative competencies, which will increase the demand in the labor market.

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