

III. ПРОБЛЕМЫ МЕНЕДЖМЕНТА И МАРКЕТИНГА. ЛОГИСТИКА

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BENCHMARKING AS A TOOL FOR FORMING A MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CATER- ING COMPANY

The article is devoted to the consideration of the essence and specifics of benchmarking as a method of comparing the key indicators of an organization with the corresponding indicators of competitors or with the average level in the industry in order to rank it and as a process of determining, understanding and adapting existing examples of effective business processes in order to improve their own similar processes. The practical significance of the materials of the article is to assess the productivity of the introduction of benchmarking elements into the process of forming a marketing strategy, for benchmarking evaluation of other enterprises, and analysis of data obtained because of benchmarking research.

Keywords: hospitality industry, restaurant business, benchmarking, marketing, marketing strategies.

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БЕНЧМАРКИНГ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ ФОР- МИРОВАНИЯ МАРКЕТИНГОВОЙ СТРА- ТЕГИИ РАЗВИТИЯ ПРЕДПРИЯТИЯ ОБ- ЩЕСТВЕННОГО ПИТАНИЯ

Статья посвящена рассмотрению сущности и специфики бенчмаркинга как метода сравнения ключевых показателей организации с соответствующими показателями конкурентов или со средним уровнем в отрасли с целью её ранжирования и как процесса определения, понимания и адаптации имеющихся примеров эффективных бизнес-процессов с целью улучшения собственных аналогичных процессов. Практическая значимость материалов статьи заключается в оценке продуктивности внедрения элементов бенчмаркинга в процесс формирования маркетинговой стратегии, для проведения бенчмаркинговой оценки других предприятий и анализа данных, полученных в результате проведения бенчмаркингового исследования.

Ключевые слова: индустрия гостеприимства, ресторанный бизнес, бенчмаркинг, маркетинг, стратегии маркетинга.

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Currently, the hospitality and catering industry is one of the most competitive areas of business, which leads to the search for effective marketing strategies to ensure sustainable functioning. One of the most relevant and productive management tools today is benchmarking. Its effectiveness is due to several circumstances. Firstly, the fact those companies are aware of the need for a detailed study and use of the best achievements of competitors. Secondly, the need for quality assurance, since in a situation of a variety of products and services, consumers pay significant attention to it. In turn, benchmarking is aimed at improving quality, improving the

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process or product. Thirdly, benchmarking allows evaluating strategies and goals of work in comparison with first-class enterprises to ensure a long-term position in the market [1].

Benchmarking is a method of comparing the key indicators of an organization with the corresponding indicators of competitors or with the average level in the industry in order to rank it, "the process of identifying, separating and using knowledge and best practices" [2]. Benchmarking is also the process of identifying, understanding and adapting existing examples of the effective functioning of an organization (business process) in order to improve their own similar processes.

The theoretical foundations of benchmarking were laid in the works of quality management specialists E. Deming (as part of a series of lectures on statistical quality control methods), J. Juran ("Quality Management Manual"), F. Crosby ("ZD" program ("Zero defects")), K. Ishikawa (development of a methodology for improving the quality system), T. Taguchi (TQC concept), W. Shuhart ("Statistical methods from the point of view of quality management"), etc.

The productivity of benchmarking is determined by the fact that when using it, production and marketing functions become the most manageable. Some scientists consider benchmarking to be strategically oriented research, since they are directly related to the use of the main provisions, methods, approaches, systems, principles and tools of benchmarking. The main goal of benchmarking is to ensure the success of the company in the future based on research, and to choose the right development strategy. From this, we can conclude that benchmarking can be considered one of the main directions of strategically oriented marketing research. When developing and choosing a marketing strategy, the company always relies on market research data, but in modern business conditions, it is not enough just to study market conditions, competitors. Whenever possible, it is necessary to use a benchmarking concept so that, because of strategy development, the most successful and appropriate experience of other companies under existing conditions is taken into account in order to ensure a greater probability of success and risk reduction. Table 1 presents a comparative characteristic of the value of benchmarking in the process of conducting statistically oriented marketing research.

Table 1 – Comparative characteristics of the value of benchmarking in the process of conducting strategically oriented marketing research [3]

Characteristics of the research process	The importance of benchmarking in strategically oriented marketing research		
	Market research	Competitor analysis	Benchmarking
Common goal	Market analysis, market segments and product recognition	Analysis of competitors' strategies	Analysis of the experience of competitors or leading enterprises
Subject of study	Customer needs	Competitor strategies	Business methods that meet the needs of customers
Object of study	Goods and services	Markets and goods	Business methods, products
Main limitations	Degree of customer satisfaction	Market activity	Not limited
Significance for decision-making	Insignificant	Some	Very big
Main sources of information	Buyers	Industry experts and analysts	Leading companies in the industry, competitors

The benchmarking approach changes the decision-making procedures in marketing, since traditionally marketing decisions were made based on the results of marketing research and managers' intuition regarding the marketing mix. Based on this, the company's marketing strategy was developed. Modern business conditions lead to the fact that such actions are not enough to ensure the competitiveness of the company and its stable position. It is necessary to study the experience of business leaders' activities and behavior in the market to increase the validity of marketing strategies.

The process of marketing planning, which sets strategic directions for business development, is the most important area for which benchmarking is crucial. The goals and guidelines that depend on the mission of the enterprise are largely determined by the results of benchmarking. The use of benchmarking in the process of strategic marketing planning ensures that the requirements imposed by the external environment and customers are considered on the basis of verified data.

In the process of developing marketing strategies, an outside view is important, as it sets the strategic direction of development and promotes the allocation of limited resources. Knowledge about the working methods of the best firms and the needs of buyers obtained in the process of benchmarking is important information necessary for the development of the enterprise and ensuring its competitiveness. Figure 1 shows an enlarged scheme for developing a

marketing strategy using a benchmarking approach. In the process of such transformations, a marketing manager should study and analyze how much his company is adapted to the requirements of the market, how and by what means his activities can be improved, what needs to be done for this, etc. That is, the initial problem is the transformation of activities within the enterprise in accordance with the requirements of the market [4].

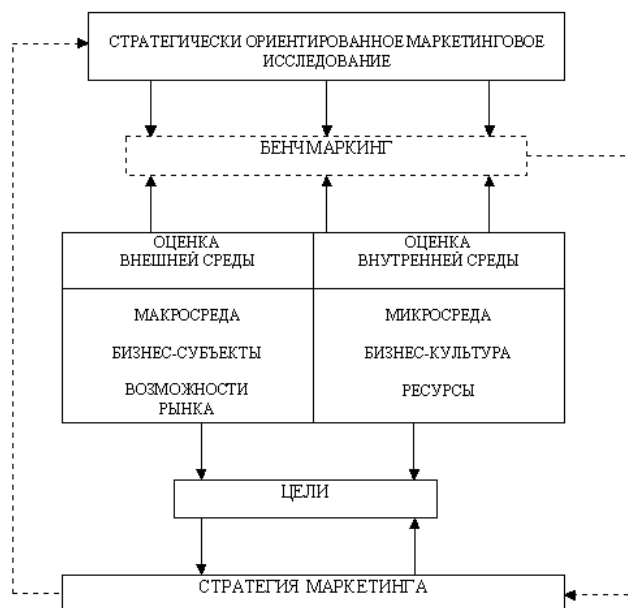


Figure 1 – Development of a marketing strategy using a benchmarking approach

In the process of benchmarking, not only business processes or products can be compared. Completely different elements of a business can be considered. At the same time, it is important to understand that it is important to identify the main reasons for high efficiency, and, therefore, it is necessary to clearly understand the consideration of which objects can find out. One of the most common objects of benchmarking research are products and services. Product research gives the company a more complete understanding of its position in the market, competitive positions. In turn, the study of services is not so easy, since it is much more difficult to measure the effectiveness of services with a reference comparison. Therefore, in this case it is necessary to conduct more interviews and field research.

Another object of benchmarking research may be financial indicators. It is worth noting that the study of this object may not always provide an explanation for the reasons for the high competitiveness of the enterprise, but it helps to quantify possible achievements and formulate tasks. At the same time, the analysis of this object is not accompanied by very large costs, and allows you to use publicly available information.

The analysis of business processes in benchmarking is the most effective, since business processes are of great importance, reflect the capabilities of the company, and are closest to the fundamental tools for implementing competitiveness. It is often possible to observe that companies have access to the same resources, and the same circle of customers, but at the same time, one company organizes its business processes much more efficiently, and as a result has a higher quality with lower costs. The main disadvantage of studying this object is that it is not easy to get detailed information about the processes of another company. The second disadvantage is the lack of clarity of leaders in business processes for reference comparison. In addition, it is important not to limit ourselves to considering one business process, it is necessary to study the entire value chain in which it enters, for example, including suppliers and distributors.

In addition, the objects of benchmarking research can be functions, groups, and organizations. The main goal of benchmarking is to understand how other companies manage to make any process, product or service effective. Therefore, the study of the structure of the organization, the organization of activities, namely functions, divisions, business units, employees of the company, all these components can most clearly characterize the company, and understand the reasons for success [5].

Let us denote the methodological basis of benchmarking for evaluating the restaurant business. The proposed methods are divided according to the stages of benchmarking at which they can be applied and according to the tasks to be solved (Table 2).

Table 2 – Methodological basis of benchmarking for a catering company [6]

Stage of the benchmarking process	Benchmarking tasks	The method used
Planning	Identifying a comparison partner who is a leader in a particular field	Method of prioritization of compared competitors
	Determining competitor priority	1. Competitor search method 2. The method of assessing the competitive status 3. Competitor Map
	The choice of the method of collecting information and its direct collection	1. Competitive intelligence method 2. Partner information exchange method 3. Mystery guest
Analysis	Identification of gaps, weaknesses and development parameters	1. The method of assessing the competitiveness of the restaurant 2. GAP analysis 3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the analyzed process at a competitor restaurant 4. The method of building competitor profiles 5. The method of scoring
	Forecasting the future measurement level of the object of comparison	Linear programming method
Preparation of conclusions	Discussion of comparison results	1. The method of synectics 2. The method of brainstorming 3. Method 635 4. Discussion
	Setting goals for organizational units to achieve a new level of development	Method of building a goal tree
Implementation and evaluation of results	Development of plans to achieve goals	Management method by goals
	Assessment of the introduction of innovations	Assessment of the economic and social effectiveness of transformations resulting from the use of benchmarking: 1. The method of strategic matrices 2. The method of calculating the ratio of costs and the resulting effect

The marketing strategy of a catering company is a set of long-term solutions that are associated with determining ways to meet customer needs with internal resources of the enterprise and external capabilities.

The presence of a marketing strategy gives the company several advantages:

- reducing the degree of uncertainty and risk in the implementation of marketing activities;
- provision of certain resources to meet the needs of selected target market segments;
- coordination of decisions and actions in the field of marketing;
- reducing the desire to maximize current profits instead of investing in solving long-term problems;
- development of marketing programs focused on the set goals;
- motivation of staff through the link between the achievement of their personal goals and the effectiveness of marketing activities;
- creating the necessary grounds for evaluating and monitoring the results of marketing activities.

A marketing strategy is a general direction of development and cannot do without concretization through marketing programs. The program necessarily describes the marketing elements that will be used, and the marketing complex as a whole, in addition, the distribution of financial resources within the marketing budget is indicated.

Marketing strategies used by catering companies can be divided into three groups: development strategies, portfolio strategies, and competitive strategies. Development strategies involve various models of enterprise management through the choice of the type of business activity. Portfolio strategies imply options for the allocation of limited resources, which are accompanied by the use of criteria for the attractiveness of market segments and the capabilities of the restaurant's business units. Competitive strategies are aimed at providing a competitive advantage for the company in the market.

In addition, benchmarking is the optimal tool for the formation and adjustment of a marketing strategy. In the restaurant business, benchmarking is most often aimed at selecting effective customer service practices. The algorithm for forming a marketing strategy based on benchmarking is shown in Figure 2.

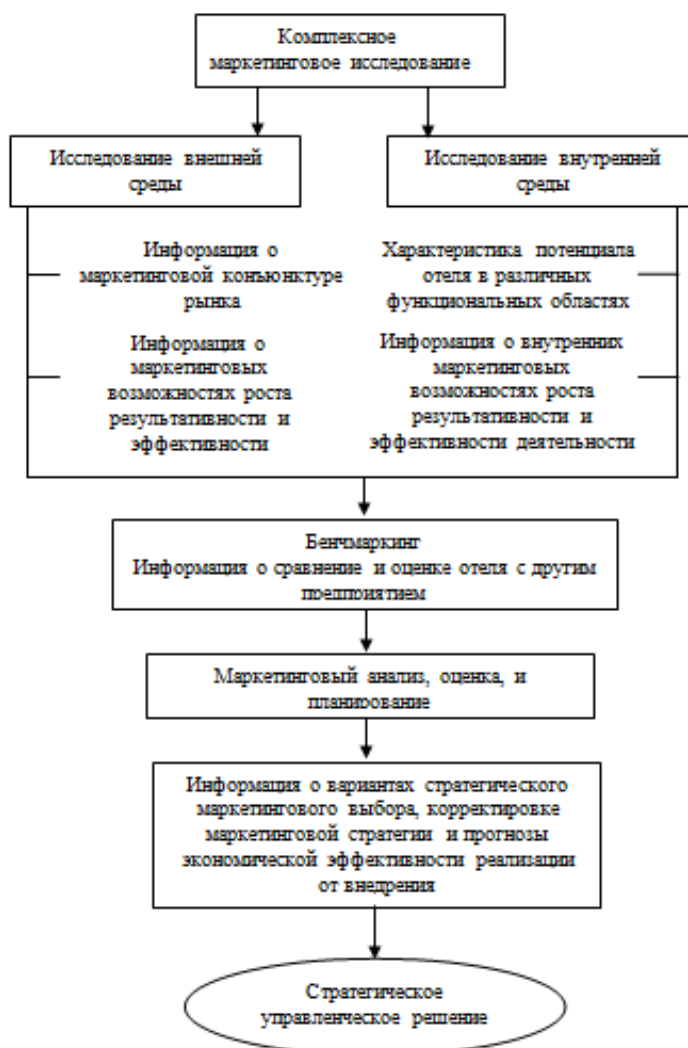


Figure 2 – Formation of a marketing strategy based on benchmarking

It is worth noting that unstable market conditions can complicate the application of the benchmarking approach, since the variability of external marketing factors and abrupt unpredictable changes in indicators and the entire market situation reduce the value of benchmarking as a tool for strategic development of the company, and does not allow to assess its real economic efficiency. In favorable conditions, benchmarking will help in long-term planning of activities and a catering company can get many advantages when using benchmarking technology (Figure 3).

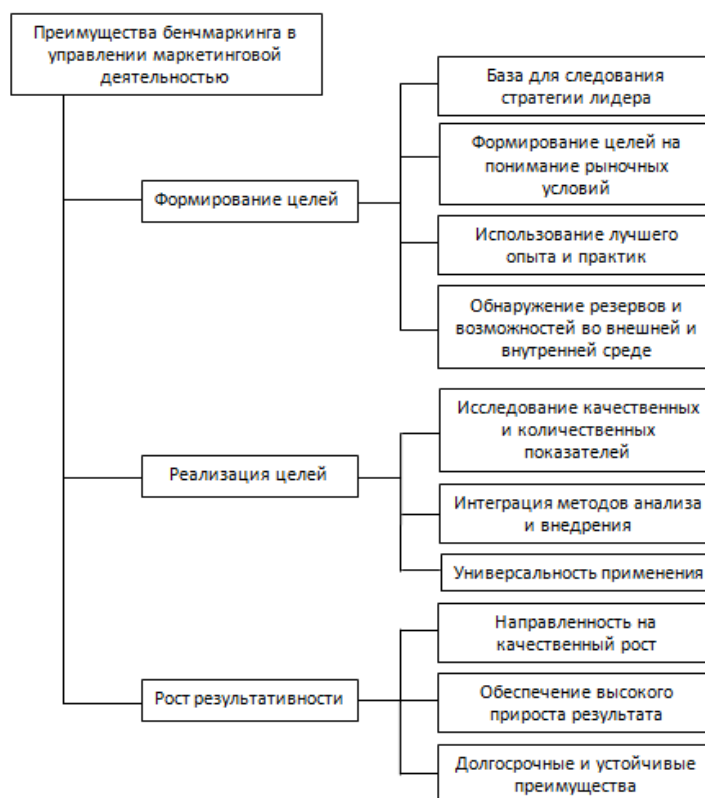


Figure 3 – Advantages of using benchmarking in restaurant marketing activities

Thus, the marketing strategy of a catering company is a set of long-term solutions that are associated with determining ways to meet customer needs with internal resources of the enterprise and external capabilities. The presence of a marketing strategy gives the catering company pronounced advantages, and its implementation is aimed at creating competitive advantages and effective use of the conditions that have developed in the market to achieve its strategic goals. In turn, the productivity of introducing benchmarking elements into the process of forming a marketing strategy consists in evaluating competitors' enterprises, analyzing the data obtained to improve their own similar processes.

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