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### THE ROLE OF PARTNERSHIPS IN THE MARKETING STRATEGY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

## РОЛЬ ПАРТНЕРСТВ У МАРКЕТИНГОВІЙ СТРАТЕГІЇ ЗАКЛАДІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

In the highly competitive environment in which higher education institutions operate, partnerships are becoming an indispensable element of the university's marketing strategy, helping to strengthen its position in the market.

Moreover, the preoccupation of higher education institutions to create sustainable partnerships with stakeholders must become a priority, given that the relevance of the current education system is increasingly questioned by students, academics, employers and the community [1, p. 11].

In this context, implementing effective strategies for developing and maintaining relationships with strategic partners can have a significant impact on the competitiveness of the higher education institution.

Partnerships can exist at different levels, from one-off collaborations to full partnerships in which organizations with shared values and goals contribute complementary skills to co-create value. They offer multiple perspectives, learning opportunities, and connections, creating ecosystems that collaborate for mutual benefit [2, p. 177].

At the decision-making level, universities need to identify the right partners, develop and maintain collaborations that bring value to the institution, the academic community and society as a whole [1, p. 44].

Based on this premise, this paper summarizes the areas and benefits of strategic collaboration between universities and their key partners: industry, other higher education institutions and government.

*Partnerships with industry* support universities' efforts to increase the quality, relevance, social impact, and employability of their graduates. Currently, higher education is increasingly subject to criticism regarding its reduced relevance and social impact [187, p. 346]. Numerous studies highlight the discrepancies between the knowledge and skills acquired through formal education and the competencies required in the labor market. In this context, strengthening and expanding forms of collaboration with industry would allow for a constant alignment of the educational

offer with the demands of the labor market and facilitate the exchange of expertise between academia and the business world.

Today, universities can no longer treat employers merely as beneficiaries, whose needs must be studied to meet the labor force requirements, but as co-producers of educational services with an active role in ensuring its quality.

According to the results of the empirical study conducted, representatives of the business environment attest a relatively high interest in developing sustainable partnerships with educational institutions, covering various areas of collaboration, including internship opportunities, mentoring and coaching programs, collaborative research projects, exchange of expertise, development of relevant training programs and curricula, etc. [1, p. 99].

*Partnerships with educational institutions* contribute to achieving several marketing objectives of the university, such as: increasing visibility and recognition, improving the quality of education and research, enhancing student and employee satisfaction, increasing the competitiveness and attractiveness of the educational institution, etc.

Exchanging students, designing joint bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, developing collaborative research projects, organizing joint conferences and events, and providing mobility opportunities for teaching staff are just a few ways to develop collaborations and mutual exchanges between universities. This form of strategic collaboration between universities at home and abroad promotes the exchange of resources and expertise, providing learning and research opportunities for both students and faculty.

The strategic approach to *partnerships between universities and public authorities* extends their significance beyond the boundaries of simple collaboration. For higher education institutions, these partnerships become an important component of their marketing strategy, contributing to increased visibility, promoting institutional image, enhancing attractiveness for students and employers, and, implicitly, increasing the university's competitiveness.

In the context of often austere financial resources, partnerships with public

authorities facilitate universities' access to additional resources, such as: investments in infrastructure, support in the development of training programs that respond to the demands of the labor market, funding for research projects, etc. At the same time, these partnerships can provide support in expanding international collaboration networks, promoting access to international research projects and opportunities for academic mobility.

In conclusion, partnerships developed by higher education institutions at both the local and international level make significant contributions to improving the quality of education and research, allowing for the attraction of financial resources and experts, contributing to enhancing the student experience, promoting innovation and strengthening the institution's market position and sustainability.

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