

# The Training Environment – A Key Factor in Shaping Education Marketing

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**Abstract:** Education marketing involves promotional activities in the education sector aimed at attracting, retaining, and developing learners. In the context of increasingly intense competition among educational institutions, building and developing a high-quality training environment, both in terms of physical and intangible aspects, has become vital for survival. The training environment is not only the space where teaching and learning occur but also represents the institution's image, brand, and the perceived value for learners. This article provides an in-depth analysis of the role of the training environment in shaping education marketing and proposes fundamental solutions to enhance the quality of the training environment, thereby improving communication, promotion, and enrollment effectiveness for educational institutions.

**Keywords:** Education marketing, training environment, higher education, learner behavior, learning experience, educational branding

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## I. Introduction

In the era of globalization and digital transformation, educational institutions compete not only in terms of academic programs or faculty quality but also in image, branding, and learning experiences. This creates an urgent need to apply marketing in education, commonly referred to as education marketing. One of the critical factors determining the effectiveness of education marketing is the training environment. This encompasses the physical, emotional, and social spaces where teaching and learning take place. The training environment serves as both a foundation for ensuring educational quality and an emotional factor that fosters learner engagement and amplifies the institution's brand to both learners and society. Therefore, recognizing and developing the training environment as a tool for education marketing is a crucial task for educational institutions today.

## B. Content

### 1. Overview of education marketing

#### 1.1. Concept of education marketing

Education marketing is the process of analyzing learners' needs, developing and delivering appropriate educational value, thereby satisfying learners' needs and expectations while enhancing the image, reputation, and standing of the educational institution.

#### 1.2. The Role of education marketing

*Firstly, attracting learners through the promotion of programs, faculty, and facilities*

Education marketing is a crucial tool that enables educational institutions to reach their target market, providing comprehensive and transparent information about: Academic programs: course content, teaching methods, learning models (traditional, blended, online, etc.), and alignment with career trends; Faculty: the reputation, academic qualifications, teaching experience, and practical expertise are particularly appealing to parents and students; Facilities: images of libraries, lecture halls, laboratories, dormitories, sports areas, etc., serve as the "brand storefront" that first captures learners' attention.

*Secondly, retaining learners through high-quality education, academic support services, and positive campus experiences*

If promotion is the "promise," then maintaining and retaining learners is about "fulfilling the promise." At this stage, education marketing plays a role in shaping and strengthening the relationship between learners and the institution through: Actual educational quality: effective curricula, appropriate pedagogical methods, and high applicability; Support services for learning and student life: academic advising, psychological counseling,

scholarship support, job placement, clubs, extracurricular activities, etc.; Campus experience: classroom engagement, activities beyond the classroom, and positive emotions during the learning process. *Thirdly, developing the educational brand, creating credibility with society and stakeholders* An educational brand is an intangible asset but carries long-term strategic value. Education marketing helps form and develop this brand through: Building a professional, trustworthy image in the eyes of parents, businesses, and social organizations; Communicating the institution's achievements (scientific research, student entrepreneurship, international collaborations, etc.); Establishing a position within the education-labor system, thereby attracting social resources, sponsors, and academic partners. A strong brand enables the institution to attract talented students, skilled faculty, easily mobilize investment resources, and gain a competitive advantage in the internationalization of education.

*Fourthly, increasing learner satisfaction and loyalty, leading to positive advocacy and word-of-mouth from learners*

Modern marketing no longer focuses on "one-way promotion" but shifts toward centering the learner's experience. When learners feel satisfied – meaning their expectations are met or exceeded – they become "natural spokespersons" for the institution.

The positive word-of-mouth effect (word-of-mouth) in communities, families, and social media is a powerful promotional tool with near-zero cost. The proportion of students referring relatives and friends to enroll is also a key indicator of the effectiveness of education marketing based on real experiences.

In summary, education marketing plays a vital role in the development of education today. It not only promotes the institution's image but also ensures sustainable development through designing, maintaining, and developing comprehensive relationships with learners, based on real experiences and the value provided by the educational training environment.

### **1.3. Components of education marketing**

According to the extended 7P model of service marketing (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical evidence), the training environment falls under the "Physical evidence" component – tangible proof of service quality.

**Product:** In education, the product is not only the training program but also the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional competencies that learners gain after the training process. The product can be divided into: Core product (knowledge, degrees, professional skills) and augmented product (support services, job opportunities, extracurricular activities, business connections).

**Price:** The cost of education is not merely tuition fees but also includes opportunity costs, time costs, travel costs, and emotional costs. The cost of education must reflect the value perceived by learners while ensuring affordability for the target audience.

**Place:** In education, distribution channels refer to the ways training programs are delivered: at the main campus, affiliated campuses, online training, or blended training. Optimizing these learning channels enables learners to access education easily and flexibly.

**Promotion:** This involves communication and promotional activities for training programs, the institution's image, brand, and core values. It includes: online and offline advertising, PR, event organization, enrollment counseling, internal marketing, and word-of-mouth.

**People:** People in education marketing include: Instructors (who create and deliver the value of the educational product); Support staff (who directly interact with and assist learners); Learners (who are both the served audience and agents shaping the brand image through their experiences and dissemination).

**Process:** The process of delivering educational services includes: enrollment, training, assessment, degree awarding, and job placement support. The transparency, consistency, and convenience of these processes directly impact learner satisfaction and experience.

"Physical evidence" – this is a key factor in intangible services like education. It includes tangible manifestations that allow learners to perceive the quality of training services, such as: Facilities (classrooms, libraries, laboratories, teaching equipment, etc.); Learning materials, the institution's website, uniforms, signage, etc.; Spatial design, pedagogical environment, and campus system.

In many service sectors, "Physical evidence" is merely external signs for customers to perceive the service, such as restaurant decor, packaging colors, or staff uniforms. However, in education, the training environment as part of this factor needs to be expanded in both scope and impact, forming the concept of a comprehensive training environment, including: Physical learning spaces (not only classrooms but also creative spaces, self-study areas, digital libraries, playgrounds, green environments, and places reflecting the institution's educational philosophy); Organizational culture (campus culture, interactions between instructors and learners, and the institution's core values manifested in every interaction and activity. This is "intangible evidence" but has a strong impact on learners' perceptions and experiences); Social interactions – campus spirit (a safe, open learning environment where learners are encouraged to express opinions, develop critical thinking, and connect with peers and

instructors, all contributing to the distinctiveness of educational service quality); Overall learning experience (a combination of infrastructure, people, processes, and culture. This is the core factor in retaining learners and sustainably affirming the institution's brand).

## **II. Concept and classification of the training environment**

### **2.1. Concept of the training environment**

The training environment is the totality of physical, social, and cultural factors that directly influence the teaching-learning process and the holistic development of learners. It encompasses both tangible elements (infrastructure, equipment, etc.) and intangible elements (psychological atmosphere, communication, campus culture, etc.).

### **2.2. Classification of the training environment**

The physical environment: facilities, equipment, information technology, libraries, dormitories, etc. A high-quality physical environment provides optimal learning conditions, ensures physical and mental well-being, and creates a positive impression in the eyes of parents and learners. This serves as “tangible proof” of the institution's commitment to training quality within the education marketing strategy.

The emotional environment: the learning atmosphere, sense of safety, encouragement, and motivation for personal development. A positive emotional environment fosters a psychological state of “confidence – positivity – proactivity,” enabling learners to maximize their individual potential. In the education marketing strategy, this is the most powerful factor in retaining learners, contributing to building satisfaction and loyalty to the institution.

The social environment: relationships between learners and instructors, among learners themselves, and campus culture. A positive social environment helps learners develop soft skills, social competencies, positive life attitudes, and a sense of belonging. This is a critical foundation for creating a cohesive, civilized, and distinctive learning community, while also serving as a highly effective “intrinsic communication” factor. The digital environment: electronic learning materials, LMS, and online teaching support tools. The digital environment enhances flexibility, personalizes the learning process, expands access to knowledge, and enables the development of modern blended training models. At the same time, it is a standout feature in the communication and marketing efforts of progressive educational institutions.

## **III. The Role of the training environment in education marketing**

### **3.1. Creating the “First Impression” for learners**

In marketing, the first impression plays a crucial role in shaping customers' perceptions and investment attitudes. In education, the “customers” are learners and parents – who often make decisions based heavily on intuitive perceptions. A well-maintained, modern, and friendly learning environment generates positive emotions and a strong impression for learners, particularly during enrollment counseling, career fairs, or campus visits. Conversely, a dilapidated, disorganized, or unprofessional environment is likely to create a sense of disrespect toward learners and diminish trust in the quality of training.

### **3.2. Retaining and fostering learner loyalty**

Beyond creating an initial impression, the training environment nurtures positive emotions throughout the learning process, thereby helping to retain learners and enhance their satisfaction. A positive learning experience in an inspiring campus environment makes learners feel connected, gradually turning them into “natural brand ambassadors.” They recommend the institution to friends and family, share positive feedback on social media or in professional settings. This has a marketing value far greater than conventional advertising campaigns because it is authentic and emotionally resonant.

### **3.3. Creating a competitive differentiator**

In a context where educational institutions are increasingly similar in terms of training programs, tuition fees, and even faculty (many institutions hire the same adjunct instructors), the training environment becomes a genuine and hard-to-replicate competitive advantage. A unique training environment that reflects the institution's identity, educational philosophy, and commitment to quality serves as an emotional differentiator, easily memorable, and helps the institution stand out more distinctly in the minds of parents and learners – thereby increasing its competitive edge in an increasingly fierce education market.

### **3.4. An effective channel for brand dissemination**

Learners often share their learning experiences through social media. A “beautiful – modern – humane” learning environment spreads a positive image to the community naturally, more effectively than costly and labor-intensive promotional campaigns. When learners share about the institution on social media or with those around them, it is: More effective than paid advertising (because natural word-of-mouth is more credible and emotionally compelling); Reduces marketing costs (as content is produced by learners themselves); Enhances brand recognition and credibility (because shared experiences have a profound, authentic reach).

## **IV. Current state of the training environment at some educational institutions**

### **4.1. Notable strengths**

Firstly, many institutions have invested in modern, well-equipped facilities, particularly private universities. Several universities and colleges have strategically developed their training environments as a competitive advantage, resulting in modern, friendly, and inspiring learning spaces. For example, institutions such as FPT University, VinUni, RMIT University, and Phenikaa University possess synchronized facilities, open spaces, abundant learning resources, modern self-study areas, and comfortable sports facilities and dormitories. These visually appealing campus environments become naturally viral content on social media, significantly enhancing brand recognition.

Secondly, the application of information technology in teaching, learning, and academic management has been strongly promoted. The adoption of learning management platforms such as LMS (Moodle, Canvas), e-learning systems, digitized learning materials, and online teaching has been accelerated, especially following the COVID-19 period. At many institutions, learners can register for courses, track their academic progress, participate in online exams, evaluate courses, and monitor results through integrated portals. Some educational institutions have developed proprietary learning systems connected to academic social networks, enhancing a comprehensive digital experience for learners.

Thirdly, the image of an open learning environment that emphasizes interaction and creativity. Many institutions have shifted from traditional models to flexible classroom models, encouraging learners to engage in discussions, group work, debates, and project-based research. Classrooms are designed as “learning studios,” “maker spaces,” or “creative self-study” areas. Instructors play a supportive role, while learners are encouraged to explore, experience, and present their individual ideas.

These transformations reflect a new awareness of the training environment as a tool for creating positive and distinctive learning experiences in education marketing.

### **4.2. Existing limitations and areas for improvement**

Firstly, dilapidated facilities at many public institutions. Although some key public institutions have received good investment, in general, outdated, inconsistent, and severely degraded facilities remain widespread, particularly at vocational colleges, regional universities, and professional secondary schools. Cramped classrooms, obsolete equipment, poorly resourced libraries, and dilapidated dormitories negatively impact learners’ academic and living experiences. Many institutions lack self-study spaces, communal activity areas, cafeterias, and sports facilities – essential components of a modern training environment.

Secondly, the social environment is not yet truly open, and passive learning remains prevalent. Teacher-student relationships are often hierarchical, with an emphasis on one-way knowledge transmission. Learners are rarely encouraged to debate, discuss, or express personal opinions. Many classrooms still follow the “teacher lectures, students take notes” model, leading to passive learning, limited interaction, and restricted development of creative thinking and soft skills. Relationships among learners lack cohesion, with instances of regional or gender discrimination, failing to create a truly humane and equitable campus environment.

Thirdly, campus culture has not been systematically developed. Many institutions lack a clear strategy for establishing core values or a distinct cultural identity. Extracurricular activities, life skills education, and club activities are not adequately invested in. Deviant behaviors in the academic environment, such as cheating in exams, uncivil conduct, and subtle forms of campus violence, persist in some places. Fourthly, lack of alignment between the learning environment and real-world labor market demands. There remains a gap between training content, teaching methods, and employer needs. The learning environment does not adequately simulate real workplace settings (lacking practical spaces, mock business models, or business connections). This results in learners who, despite holding degrees, lack professional experience, contributing to the phenomenon of “too many graduates, too few skilled workers” or degree-holding unemployment.

### **4.3. Key causes**

Firstly, lack of investment resources. Many public institutions remain dependent on state budgets and lack financial autonomy to improve learning conditions.

Secondly, traditional management mindsets. Some institutional leaders do not prioritize the training environment as a strategic marketing factor, leading to insufficient long-term investment.

Thirdly, slow digital transformation. The adoption of educational technology is often superficial, lacking systematic implementation and dedicated IT-education personnel.

Fourthly, lack of business collaboration. Due to the absence of a robust “institution-business-market” linkage model, the training environment is not sufficiently aligned with professional realities.

#### **4.4. Issues for education marketing**

Firstly, without comprehensive improvements to the training environment, educational institutions will face difficulties in attracting high-quality learners, particularly in the context of an increasingly competitive education market.

Secondly, a lackluster, uninspiring learning environment will reduce positive word-of-mouth effects, negatively impacting the institution’s image and reputation.

Thirdly, if the strategic role of the training environment in education marketing is correctly recognized, educational institutions can leverage it as a branding catalyst and an effective tool for retaining learners.

### **V. Fundamental solutions to enhance the quality of the training environment in education marketing**

#### **5.1. Comprehensive investment in facilities**

Facilities are not only the “hardware” supporting training but also the “visual language” expressing the institution’s commitment to quality. Therefore, it is necessary to:

Build multifunctional, friendly, and flexible learning spaces: Design classrooms to support modern pedagogical methods such as group work, discussions, debates, and project-based learning; Develop “learn-anywhere” spaces such as outdoor study areas, creative spaces, etc.; Ensure friendliness, aesthetics, and approachability – fostering inspiration for learning and a positive mindset among learners. Equip modern, user-friendly digital learning resources, specifically: Build digital libraries with flexible 24/7 access; Invest in interactive learning materials, video lectures, and cross-platform digitized textbooks; Enable learners to study according to their individual needs – a key factor in experiential education marketing.

#### **5.2. Fostering a positive social environment**

The social environment is an “intangible” component but has a profound impact on learning motivation and learner loyalty. Therefore, it is necessary to:

Create mechanisms for dialogue between learners and instructors: Establish formal communication channels such as student forums, instructor-student meet-and-greet events, and course feedback forms; Instructors should be trained in communication skills, companionship, psychological support, and fostering a democratic, debate-friendly learning atmosphere.

Build a code of campus culture that promotes respect, collaboration, and sharing, specifically: Develop a code of civilized, respectful, and creative conduct among all stakeholders in the campus environment; Encourage learners to participate in clubs, volunteer activities, and extracurricular programs to enhance social connections, soft skills, and community awareness; Campus culture should be integrated into internal communications, celebrating positive examples and feedback to shape the institution’s brand identity.

#### **5.3. Strengthening technology integration**

Educational technology not only supports teaching and learning but also enables personalized learning experiences, improving management and education marketing effectiveness. Therefore, it is necessary to: Develop online learning systems and blended learning models. Integrate platforms such as: LMS, digital assessment systems, learner feedback software, and community learning resource-sharing platforms; Promote blended learning models – flexibly combining online and in-person learning to optimize experiences and reduce physical space constraints.

Personalize learning experiences by: Applying learning analytics to track progress, preferences, and individual learning needs; Providing tailored course, material, and learning format recommendations based on each learner’s capabilities. This is a behavior-based marketing strategy – personalizing training products based on data.

#### **5.4. Linking the learning environment with the labor market**

An ideal learning environment must simulate the demands, atmosphere, and experiences of real-world professions. This also aligns with the trend of education marketing tied to practical outcome value. Therefore, it is necessary to:

Design learning environments that simulate real-world settings by: Inviting businesses to participate in designing spaces, such as classrooms simulating workshops, offices, studios, customer service centers, etc.; Adopting a “school-in-business, business-in-school” model, combining vocational training with practical experience. Connect students with professional environments by: Organizing projects involving businesses; Designing internship and group work programs; Developing scholarship and tuition systems linked to employers, enhancing marketing value for both the institution and partners.

#### **5.5. Managing the training environment brand**

The training environment must be positioned as a core component of the educational brand – not only existing but also communicated consistently and effectively. Therefore, it is necessary to:

Integrate the training environment into branding strategies. Clearly define the unique value of the learning environment that the institution is building. Use images of the training environment in brochures, promotional videos, websites, and social media as a tangible brand asset.

Manage training environment communications by: Encouraging students to share learning experiences; Organizing photo contests or student narratives about campus spaces; Ensuring consistency between real experiences and marketing messages. Avoid the situation of “promising one thing, delivering another.”

### **VI. Conclusion**

In the era of education marketization, the quality of the training environment is a testament to the capability and reputation of an educational institution. Beyond being a critical factor, the training environment is and will remain a strategic weapon in modern education marketing. Investing in the training environment is not only about enhancing learning quality but also about investing in the sustainable development and effective competitiveness of educational institutions.

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