EEPG Marketing network meeting in Riga, 22-23 May 2008

Participants:

Maruša Kmet (Rokus-Klett Publishing House)
Rok Kvaternik (Rokus-Klett Publishing House)
Maire Tänna (Koolibri Publishers)
Ivi Künnapuu (Koolibri Publishers)
Ivančica Knapić (Profil International)
Matilda Tomas (Profil International)
Ana Kekanović (Profil International)
Andrija Pecarić (Profil International)
Tomas Mikalonis (Alma littera/Šviesa)
Tatjana Skusevičienė (Alma littera/Šviesa)
Vija Kibloka (Zvaigzne ABC)
Ilze Brige (Zvaigzne ABC)
Gints Balodis (Zvaigzne ABC)
Zinta Valdmane (Zvaigzne ABC)
Regina Riekstina (Zvaigzne ABC)
Sintija Buhanovska (Zvaigzne ABC)
Santa Sigale (Zvaigzne ABC)
Karlis Simanis (Zvaigzne ABC)
Preben Späth (EEPG)

Thursday 22 May

Morning session: The main topic was ‘Small market and big money – is it possible?’
The participants give an example of a simple (and low-cost) marketing project which has rapidly given a remarkable and lasting result (stressing the economical results, not the obtained market share). In this case with “small market” we understand a product (or product group in the market) with a limited consumer group.

How to create an effective image of a company in a small market?

Karlis Simanis (Zvaigzne ABC) presented the situation at Zvaigzne. First he gave an overview of the educational system in Latvia including the size of the market (number of pupils): the market will remain relatively small for the next 10 years. The schools do not have any selection criteria for selecting the textbooks. Payment for books: State pays 10%, the municipalities pay 15-20% and the parents pay the rest (70-75%). Zvaigzne sells not only own textbooks in their shops but also those of the competitors. They use the concept of spring sales where the books are sold with 15%
discount. In general their shops play a big role for the sale of textbooks. Market methods: careful selection of the authors, launching a variety of textbook marketing campaigns (e.g. lottery where you get 4 lots for a Volkswagen if you buy 4 books in 4 months (not only textbooks). Another method is to use the museum night (where all museums are open at night for free) to become known and be promoted in general.

Maruša Kmet (Rokus-Klett Publishing House) gave examples of a small market in Slovenia (textbooks for French as a foreign language) and a big market (textbooks for Slovenian (mother tongue)). Several marketing activities are only used for the small market, e.g. study groups, celebrations, personal presentations. They reached all the French teachers personally.

Maire Tänna (Koolibri Publishers) talked about the situation in Estonia where 20% of the schools in general are Russian speaking schools while 80% are Estonian. There is a development that the Russian schools are starting now to use Estonian books increasingly e.g. in Social Studies and in Estonian literature. The money for textbooks is so that for kindergarten part of the money comes from the State while the rest is paid by the parents. In primary schools all money for textbooks and workbooks is paid by the State – the schools are not allowed to ask parents to pay for workbooks (but actually it happens that schools ask the
parents in some cases). In secondary schools textbooks are paid by the State, parents have to buy workbooks. The state pays in total less than 50€ per pupil per year, which is a small amount since an average textbook costs 10€ and an average workbook costs 3€. Supplementary materials are important income for educational publishers. The schoolbooks catalogue is sent to each teacher personally. Also they mail information about new books directly to teachers using the teachers’ database they have built up.

Ana Kekanović (Profil International) explained the Croatian situation where all textbooks have to be approved by the Ministry of Education. She showed an example of a simple marketing project which has rapidly given a remarkable and lasting result (with titles for Nature and Science) for primary level. One picture book has been produced for each county in Croatia, so 21 different picture books. This is an example of several small markets (the number of 3rd grade pupils in the different counties is from 150 to 1,500 pupils. In these books the pupils learn about their local environment. Marketing activities include sending notice to all schools and notice to local media. The authors visit all primary schools. An example of small and big market is the sale of textbooks for English (big market) and Italian (small market): promotional materials, workshops etc are similar for both types of market, on the other hand big events like two day seminars are only organised for the big market.

Tomas Mikalonis (Alma littera/Šviesa) described that in Lithuania they have big markets for Languages, Maths, History but smaller markets for other school subjects. In the big markets there are 17 publishers competing and in the small market only 5 competing publishers. In 2006 a new subject was introduced in grades 11 and 12 politology (and 25% of the students actually choose this new subject). The share of market here is 100%. They have already sold 20,000 copies (whole market) and since the price is about 7.5€ and the production price is around 1.5€ there is very positive revenue. There is an interesting relationship between sales price, production price and marketing costs in the big and the small markets. Conclusion is that there is more money in the small market!

Afternoon session: The main topic was ‘Creative marketing’ Topics for presentations (examples of the experience of the participants):
  • The most attractive and original action in marketing.
• Different examples of successful creative marketing projects.

• Project which has been too innovative (over-creative) to implement it.

• Implemented projects competitors were not frightened of.

• Examples of commercial/marketing slogans and their interpretation

Santa Sigale (Zvaigzne ABC) talked about different campaigns, e.g. the Green Paper (together with World Wildlife Fund), fabric bags, books printed on FSC certified paper. Also together with ECCO shoes: if you buy books for 15 Lats, you get 15% discount on shoes. She also mentioned the VW campaign (mentioned earlier). Finally she explained the museum night project, the museums are open until 3 a.m. and all books are sold with 50% for all books.

Maruša Kmet (Rokus-Klett Publishing House) about the campaign Green April 2008. With special awards for customers and for bookshops. The sales of the book series was increased by 53% in the year.

Ana Kekanović (Profil International) showed 3 examples of successful creative marketing campaigns. One example is a list of books where each title is combined with a recipe! Thereby it is shown that teachers and authors are also 'normal' people with interest in cooking interesting food. Next example is the campaign My Pen friend Ronnie where pupils using the books Building Blocks write letters to each other and to Ronnie. Actually Profil makes sure that all letters are answered within a month. What really happens is that the teachers collect the letters and send them to Profil. In total they received 5,000 letters. Third example is a series of teachers' meetings (seminars and workshops) and 'special' meetings that are organised by topic or subject (30 meetings in 2007 for 3,000 teachers). Topics for these meetings include primary school (ABC book), Chemistry and Physics (new textbooks and field teaching where the participants visit a factory and get ideas to do visits with their students), art (with visits to exhibitions), music (concert), etc. These events are quite expensive because it costs to invite 300 teachers to a hotel in a weekend and pay everything for them because they expect that.

Tomas Mikalonis (Alma littera/Šviesa) talked about activities organised together with the teachers' regions (local organisations) across Lithuania. One topic was to show the teachers how the authors and editors actually work in order to prepare the materials for textbooks. In some cases the teachers who attended
received discount cards of 20% to buy books in the bookshops of Šviesa and partners. In other cases the authors were giving presentations and lectures to the pupils/students where they explained the ideas they had when producing the material. Another approach is sweepstakes for e.g. the teachers to win prizes in the form of travel expenses paid. For children (i.e. a class) there is a trip to win, and for school principles there is furniture for a whole class to win.

Maruša Kmet (Rokus-Klett Publishing House) presented some campaigns where slogans had been used. In one campaign about textbooks from different subjects they had put the slogan ‘Know for more’ on all the covers of the series of additional materials. In a competition for pupils to write a story they used the slogan ‘I build word for word’, and actually more than 4,000 stories were sent in. The best stories were published in a book, and prizes were sponsored mobile phones. Finally they extended the campaign for a textbook for English called ‘Message’ with organising a conference for more than 200 teachers. This conference was announced with the slogan ‘There’s a message for you!’

Guided tour through old Riga

Friday 23 May
Morning session: The topic was ‘How to use ICT in marketing (direct e-mail, on-line presentations, invitations to presentations, showing ICT version of parts of the textbooks etc.)’

Karlis Simanis (Zvaigzne ABC) defined the concept of ICT and proceeded to explain how Zvaigzne uses ICT in different areas of marketing. Examples are e-mailing information to all schools in Latvia and databases listing the schools, groups of teachers etc. Thirdly they use the homepage of the company for marketing, too (offering downloadable book catalogues etc.) There are plans to use SMS in marketing in the future.

Maruša Kmet (Rokus-Klett Publishing House) described how they use e-mails to inform bookshops about new titles. In addition they have several web pages e.g. a general web page about the company, an on-line bookshop, a web page for the teachers’ club (additional materials, information about seminars, competitions etc). Furthermore they have web sites for magazines, and many CD-ROMs and DVDs with marketing information but also as accompanying the workbooks. This year they also started using SMS to distribute information about seminars and workshops, and the teachers can also register by SMS.

Maire Tänna (Koolibri Publishers) explained the work with the teachers’ database with information as all schools, all teachers (with info about school, subject, address, e-mail etc.). From this database they can for example select teachers with specific subjects and send directly the relevant information. On the web site you can find detailed information about all the books and the additional materials, lesson plans for a whole year.
Tomas Mikalonis (Alma littera/Šviesa) told about the web page of the company which is yet rather traditional. They are planning to organise it in a new way. There is still no database of teachers in Lithuania. On the other hand they use ICT heavily in communications with the members of their book clubs. He also mentioned very interesting and inspiring seminars and fairs about different types of internet marketing (most of them are based in the UK). One funny example of direct mailing is an e-mail with a small video attached where a famous actor greets you with your name and congratulates you on your birthday – this really creates attention (personalised e-mailing is probably a growing business). On the company web site they have a place where schools or bookshops can order directly the titles they are looking for. They are planning to reorganise their different web sites to make access easier. A great success was when they sent a questionnaire to 10,000 members of their book club (per e-mail) and offered a book for free if people answered.

Matilda Tomas (Profil International) presented the web site of Profil, where all relevant information including relevant links are directly accessible (schoolbook catalogue, teachers’ newspaper, additional materials, guides etc.). You can also access multimedia materials produced by Profil e.g. video clips showing volcanoes and other geographic issues.
Afternoon session
Preben Späth talked about the use of Quality Principles in the evaluation of textbooks. Some of the books that participate or have participated in the annual EEPG awards were used in a sample session of the Quality Guide CD-ROM for designing and evaluating educational materials.

Topics for next meeting
How much does a good image mean for the sales?

Sailing on the river Daugava

On behalf of the participants I would like to thank the organisers from Zvaigzne ABC to make this another fruitful and enjoyable network meeting.

10 June 2008
Preben Späth