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A Broad Analysis of Marketing Strategies for their Incorporation as Activities in a User Centred Process

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Abstract

The goal of this paper is to analyze the most important Marketing Strategies that can be used for the development of interactive systems. First of all, an extensive Mapping Study has been achieved, in order to search what relationship exists between Marketing and Usability. Furthermore, a study of the state of the art has been achieved to discover whether Marketing Techniques and HCI concepts already co-exist in the existing bibliography, and to what extent. Finally, a SWOT analysis has been presented of the most important marketing strategies that exist on the Market: Product, Price, Promotion and Place.

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1. Introduction

In the latest years, large companies have used different strategies in order to offer much more attractive products, having the final goal of selling them better. Within these strategies, it is very common the use of marketing elements, management products and also sale products. However, when we refer to software products, we have to take into account that these strategies must be accompanied by usability criteria, an important aspect that these products have to possess when confronting the market place.

There are a lot of different strategies of how to make software more usable and also "attractive" for the final user, not only from the Human-Computer Interaction point of view, but also from the aspect of marketing strategies that are being used. Nowadays, among the best known marketing strategies used for software applications, are the

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typical marketing strategies known for all companies, which are: product, price, promotion and place strategies. Furthermore, there are other strategies related with the digital marketing, like: Search Engine Optimization, Guzzo (2012), E-mail marketing, Lewis (2002) and the On-line advertising Guha (2010).

The main goal of this paper is to carry out a study and analysis of the most important Digital Marketing Technics that might be used for the development of interactive systems. To do so, a study of the state of the art will be achieved as well as an extensive Mapping Study in order to discover whether Marketing Techniques and HCI concepts already co-exist in the existing bibliography, and to what extent.

2. Problem stated

Nowadays, there is an extensive use of marketing strategies that companies use frequently, but there is no systematic adoption, in form of activities and technics centered on the development of software products.

The only model process that exists nowadays in which it is explained how a model process works is the ISO 9241-210 International Standard. In order to follow a relationship between the two fields of Marketing and Human Computer Interaction, there have to be found some common points between the three phases: planning the human centred design process, specifying the context of use and specifying the user and the organizational requirements.

One of the goals of this paper is to try to identify the marketing activities that can be integrated in the ISO 9241-210 standard, in the phase related to the specification of the users and organizational requirements. This aspect is explained in more detail in chapter 4 of the paper.

3. Motivation of the work

First of all, an extensive study of the digital marketing technics that exist on the market nowadays, and which of them could be applied in the Human-Computer Interaction field in the usable software development was realized. In order to achieve this, an extensive and Systematic Mapping Study has been carried out in order to discover the existing solutions so far (i.e. whether HCI and Marketing concepts coexist and to what extent). Secondly, a competitive analysis of the strategies found in the previous section has been accomplished by using a SWOT diagram, in which there was specified, for every strategy, its strengths, threats, opportunities and weaknesses related to the analysis and design under a User Centered Model Process. Finally, a list of how to transform the analyzed strategies into activities for a User Centered Model Process has been created.

4. State of the Art

4.1. Integration of the three disciplines

In order to try and relate different disciplines, it is necessary to obtain a common understanding of each field, usability engineering and marketing.

Usability engineering is a discipline that involves user participation during the development of software and systems and ensures the effectiveness, efficiency and satisfaction of the product through the use of a usability specification and metrics Fischer (2011).

Marketing is the process by which an organization relates creatively, productively and profitably to the marketplace Kotler (2011).

Marketing is the art of creating and satisfying customers at a profit Kotler (2011).

Marketing (and Marketing Research) is a discipline that offers market oriented business strategies to satisfy customer needs and expectations Fischer (2011).

This paper refers to the important issue, presented not only in the marketing area but also in the software development, that the customer cannot be viewed as the end user. Also, the end-user can be considered as a stakeholder for marketing research even like the customer, as the user needs will have a major impact on the success of the product. The only integration existent nowadays is the one between software engineering and usability engineering.

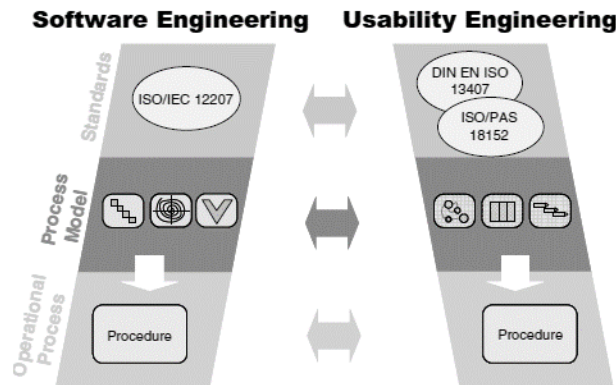


Figure 1 Software Engineering vs. Usability Engineering

The majority of the UE and SE integration approaches can be viewed in four different categories relative to: concrete implementation, common specification, aspects of definition of processes and process models and abstract and generic approaches. In the above figure, we can observe that the integration approaches for the two disciplines is based on: standards that define the overarching framework, process models that describe systematic and traceable approaches and the operational level in which the models are tailored to fit the specifics of an organization. This type of integration exists only between the disciplines of Usability Engineering and Software Engineering. As the authors claim in the article, the main goal was to discover points for integration where results from marketing might enrich the overall development process. Unfortunately, this perspective didn't represent an investigation focus of the authors. Their conclusion was that they were looking for integration points to an overall process. In the article, the authors offer some examples of synchronization tasks as: the identification of user characteristics (from Usability Engineering) with the analysis of the consumer behavior (from Marketing) or the identification environment (from Usability Engineering) with the analysis of the macroeconomic environment (from Marketing) which both can influence the context of use description.

4.2. Consumer behavior based on Marketing and Usability

The two disciplines of Marketing and Usability are very different and very poorly related to each other. One of the main points of connection represents the consumer behavior. As stated in Benini (2005) there are a lot of commercial websites that have a unique goal, that of inducing users to take part in an idea or by inducing decision-making for a purchase by using Marketing strategies. In the fields of the two disciplines there were discovered six elements which form the decision-making long-term process: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and purchase. As we can observe these six steps do not follow a hierarchical route, but can easily be influenced by the consumer's involvement with a product. Also, the buying decision is an exhaustive cognitive effort that involves the balance and the psychological and social variables.

4.3. Marketing and UCD

The main goal of User Centered Design is to focus on the understanding of customer needs. Nowadays, more and more specific usability objectives take part of the product requirements in product definition documents, which are normally generated by marketing. Marketing can have an ongoing influential role in development as initial requirements are renegotiated in the course of product development. In most cases, marketing is even known as being the "owner" of the product requirements and when facing some questions about the users, marketing may have the answers. The involvement of Marketing in the User Centered Design it is not considered as being accidental. For instance, we might consider the mind-set, role and organizational placement of marketing and its role in product definition. After analyzing from a general point of view, marketing can be viewed as the discipline

focusing on what to build for the market and how to attract buyers to it, whereas the UCD is focused on how to implement the product. However, after closely analyzing at a more deep level, the two fields, not only have points in common related to different aspects, but also might help each other during the development process of a product.

The main area in which Marketing is centered represents the strategic level. Marketing is involved in different areas like social and market trends, perceived customer needs, trying to draw out the strategic implications of the information for product opportunities, product mix and ways of shaping perception of the company and its products. The information which is nearly dealt by Marketing is influencing purchasing and market share, which represent influencing purchasing behavior at a population level, instead of individual one.

On the opposite side, the UCD focuses more on the tactical level. Its main area of interest consists of specific details of implementation of a product or a whole line of products. Its priority represents the satisfaction of a customer after purchase, instead of the purchase alone.

Even if marketing it is mostly used at incremental increases in market share, UCD needs to focus on the design that is important for all target users.

Another important aspect that we must take into account, when analyzing the two disciplines is the audience to whom we are addressing. It is a general fact that people are unique individuals, with different mind-sets, concerns, problems and accountabilities. Generally, the consumer of marketing input is traditionally the executive that has the necessary authority for deciding what product opportunities to pursue and in what way we have to position the company and its products in the market. In contrast, the consumer of UCD input during the design phase is the designer, architect, engineer or development manager which normally needs help in order to find the specific design solutions.

Furthermore, the methodology and data of interest used for the two disciplines is different.

While marketing focuses on more subjective data, retrospective self-report and opinion, UCD is more skeptical of self-report and opinion.

4.4. *ISO International Standard 9241:210*

The ISO 9241 is a multi-part standard from the International Organization Standardization covering ergonomics of human-computer interaction. The part of the ISO which was mostly used in this paper is the one related to the ISO 9241:210 (ISO International Standard 9241:210). This part studies the ergonomics of human system interaction, provides guidance on human system interaction throughout the life cycle of interactive systems.

In order to try and integrate the marketing activities in the user centred design model, first we have to know the actual phases of the design process. After analyzing each phase with its own characteristics, I considered that the most suitable phase of integrating the marketing activities shall be the third one related to the specification of the user and organizational requirements.

Trying to follow a relationship between the two areas of Marketing and Human Computer Interaction can be easily made by trying to find some connection points between the first three main phases of the ISO 9241-210 model, that are:

- planning the human centred design process;
- specifying the context of use;
- specifying the user and the organizational requirements.

4.4.1. *Plan the human centered design process*

This phase refers to the fact that human-centered design will be planned and integrated into all phases of the product life cycle, like conception, analysis, design, implementation, testing and maintenance. It is very important in this phase that, those in charge with the planning of the project must consider the relative importance of human factors.

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- a. the manner in which usability relates to the purpose and use of the product, system or service;

- b. the types of risk that can be produced after using poor usability;
- c. the nature of the development environment.

In order to select the human centered design methods, the following steps that must be taken into account are:

- a. identify the required human activity.
- b. identify the potential methods and techniques that could be used to achieve this activity.
- c. consider the potential business benefits and/or reduction in risks to the project that would be achieved by use of each potential method or technique.
- d. select the most cost-effective method taking account of the associated strengths, weakness and constraints of the type of method: time, cost, skills available, access to stakeholders and other users.

4.4.2. *Specify the context of use*

The context in which the system is used is defined by the characteristics of the users, tasks and the organizational, technical and physical environment. Basically, during the course of design, an increasing amount of detail it is added, to the context of use description. More detail, may also lead to reassessment of other information, on behalf of use description, resulting possibly in changed descriptions.

The context of use descriptions may be provided for the following purposes during development:

- a. initial high-level description of the context of use, documenting assumptions, and providing a basis for identifying users and undertaking user needs analysis;
- b. the current context of use;
- c. intended context of use of an interactive system, to provide a basis for designing the product or system for specified types of users, tasks and environments.
- d. specified context of use in which user requirements apply, to make scope of user requirements explicit.
- e. context of use for evaluations, as part of the specification of an evaluation, or as a part of the evaluation report.
- f. context of use as part of product description, that is intended for potential acquirers, purchasers or users.

Context of use information can be gathered by a combination of interviews, workshops, questionnaires and/or observation, depending on the complexity of the context of use and how well it is understood. Specific methods include context of use analysis, contextual inquiry, diary study, and ethnography and field study.

4.4.3. *Specify the user requirements*

The majority of design project consider a major activity, the identification of user needs and the specification of the functional and other requirements for the product or system. Depending on the scope of the system, the user requirements can include requirements for organizational changes and revised work styles and may suggest, opportunities to combine products and services. If the proposed interactive system will affect organizational practice, the development process should involve organizational stakeholders with the aim of optimizing both the organizational and technical systems.

5. Research Method and Mapping Study

A mapping study provides a systematic and objective procedure for identifying the nature and the extent of the empirical study data that is available to answer a particular research question Kitchenham (2004). It can also be defined as a method to build a classification scheme and structure a particular field of interest, in which the analysis of results focuses on frequencies of publications for categories within the scheme Petersen (2008).

Usually, every mapping study must start by formulating an investigation question or multiple ones. In the case of this paper, the questions that were formulated are the following:

1. What relationship is their between the field of Marketing and HCI?
2. What are the marketing strategies related to the HCI field?
3. What is the relationship between the field of Marketing and UCD (User Centered Design) Process?

The research method that was proposed in this course was realized using data bases online. Some of the search engines also contain some advanced search settings, in order to help the user, while looking for papers, books, journals, etc. Normally, for more complex searches, the user must define a keyword search, using the specific query language of each search engine.

The search engines, of each database online, are very different from one another, in the aspect of interfaces and assistants, search options and intelligence.

6. Marketing strategies and the Marketing Process Model (Marketing Mix)

A marketing strategy represents the marketing logic by which the company hopes to create this customer value and achieve these profitable relationships Kotler (2011). It is very important to decide which customer it will serve (by applying methods of segmentation and targeting) and in what way it will serve them (by differentiation and positioning). At a general view, it identifies the total market, then it divides it into smaller segments. After that, it selects the most important segments and focuses on satisfying customers in these segments.

Normally, each company has the role of designing its own marketing process model or marketing mix, based the most important factors under its control, which are Product, Price, Place and Promotion, which are also called the Four P's. Nowadays, these four P's have evolved into 7 P's, in this category entering the Physical Environment, the People and Processes. In this paper, I have considered only the most important factors used in software development, which are the 4 P's.



Figure 2 Marketing MIX

As we can see in the above figure, finding the best marketing strategy for a company requires many steps like: marketing analysis, planning, implementation and control, by which the company tries to adapt to the actors and forces in the marketing environment.

6.1. User Centered Marketing Strategy

For every company, nowadays it is very important to succeed in the marketplace. To accomplish this challenging task, companies have to think of applying a customer centered marketing strategy. Before beginning to plan this type of strategy, the company must understand the users' needs and wishes. It is a well-known fact that companies cannot serve all the customers in the same way in the same marketplace. Each user is unique in its own way, with its own characteristics and personal needs. For this reason, each company must, firstly, divide the market into segments and choose the most important ones. This is an entire process that involves Kotler (2011).

- market segmentation;
- target marketing;
- differentiation;
- market positioning.

The market segmentation represents a process of dividing a market into different categories of buyers, that have different characteristics and needs. Also, a marketing segment is composed of consumers that normally respond, basically in the same way to a given set of marketing efforts. The next phase of analyzing the marketplace represents analyzing separately each market's attractiveness and selecting one or more segments to enter by the method called market targeting. Furthermore, the company must differentiate its market offering for each segment and to define what position it wants to occupy in those segments. Normally, marketers tend to develop a unique market position for their products and what place does the product occupy in the users' opinion.

6.2. Marketing MIX

As a general knowledge, the marketing mix consists of everything the firm can do to influence the demand for its products Kotler (2011). Many companies usually use the same group of 4 strategies based on the product, price, promotion and place. The success of each company consists in the way, each of them managed to develop their own key focuses. For instance, in the case of Starbucks Company, the marketing strategy is mostly centered in 4 key elements: Authenticity, Human Connection, Participation and Core Focus Jang(2013). As mentioned above, the marketing mix depends on four variables that are: the product, price, place and promotion, figure 2.

6.2.1. Product

As a general definition, the product Kotler (2011) represents the most important aspect that can be offered to a market for attention, acquisition, use or consumption that might satisfy a want or need. It is considered as being the key element in the marketing planning.

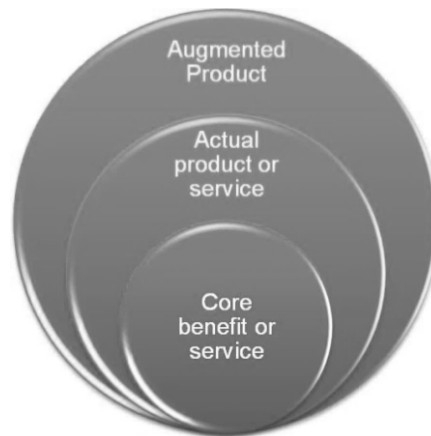


Figure 3 Types of Product

Product planners need to think about products and services on 3 levels. The above figure shows that the most important part when thinking about a product is the main core or the benefit of the product, figure 3. This represents the most important part that defines exactly what is the buyer actually buying. In the second level, product planners have to transform the core benefit of the product into an actual product. This step requires developing product features, service features, design a quality level, a brand name and packaging.

The new product development process, figure 4: new product development starts with idea generation – the systematic search for new product ideas.

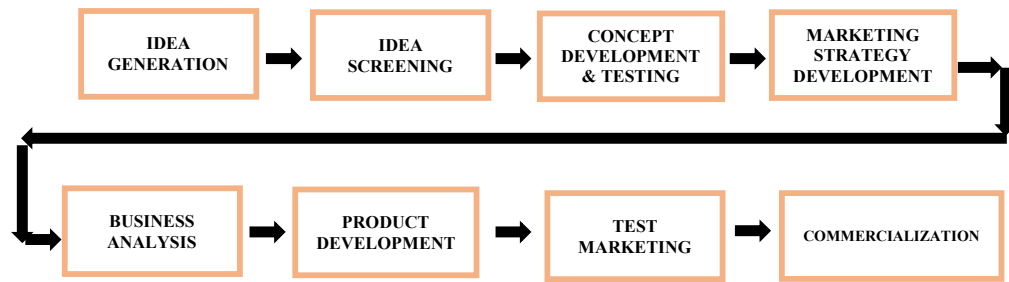


Figure 4 The New Product Development Process

The purpose of idea generation is to create a large number of ideas, while the purpose of the succeeding stages is to reduce that number. The first idea-reducing stage is idea screening, which helps spot good ideas and drop poor ones as soon as possible. Product development costs rise greatly in larger stages, so the company wants to go ahead only with the product ideas that will turn into profitable products.

An attractive idea must be developed into a product concept. It is important to distinguish between a product idea, product concept and product image. A product idea is an idea for a possible product that the company can see itself offering to the market. A product concept is a detailed version of the idea stated in meaningful consumer terms. A product image is the way consumers perceive an actual or potential product.

The marketing strategy development consists of three parts:

- the first part describes the target market: the planned product positioning; and the sales; market share and profit goals for the first few years;
- the second part of the marketing strategy statement outlines the product's planned price, distribution;
- and marketing budget for the first year;
- the third part of the marketing strategy statement describes the planned long-run sales, profit goals and marketing mix strategy.

Once management has decided on its product concept and marketing strategy, it can evaluate the business attractiveness of the proposal.

So far, for many new product concepts, the product may have existed only as a word description, a drawing or perhaps, a mock-up. If the product concept passes the business test, it moves into product development.

After that comes test marketing, the stage in which the product and marketing program are introduced into more realistic market settings. Test marketing gives the marketer experience with marketing the product before going to the great expense of full introduction. It lets the company test the product and its entire marketing program – positioning strategy, advertising, distribution, pricing, branding and packaging and budget levels.

6.2.2. Price

Price represents the quantity of money that customers need to pay in order to obtain the product. It is important to mention that the price doesn't represent the exchange of money, but also must represent a characteristic of the service, experience and an entire culture of the product jang(2013).

6.2.3. Place

Place includes company activities that make the product available to target consumers.

6.2.4. Promotion

Promotion includes activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target consumers to buy it. The most important aspect is that an effective marketing program tries to mix all the above components into an integrated marketing program built on achieving the company's marketing objectives, by delivering the value to customers.



Figure 5 The Marketing Strategies

7. Marketing Strategies

In order to find a correlation between the marketing strategies and the usability strategies, that will be further used in the User Centered Design Process, I have chosen to analyze the most important four marketing strategies that are those centered on the Product, Price, Place and Promotion, figure 5. In order to realize an analysis, of the four I have chosen the SWOT diagram, in which I will present the advantages, disadvantages, opportunities and strengths of every strategy, taking into account the Human Computer Interaction field. In order to do so, it is very important to take into account the Usability strategies used in the AIPO Process Model, in the part of requirement analysis.

7.1. SWOT Product

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> usually it has a good functionality, ease of use and relevancy; usually the product has the usability attributes, like: learnability, efficiency, memorability, satisfaction; originality of its design; having good results on the market reach; good quality offered on the market; having a warranty; developing good interfaces, that are mostly easy to use. having the possibility of creating a powerful brand image associated with quality and superior design; the powerful brand may lead to a loyal database of users, that are eager to find out the next releases of the future versions of the product; the packaging area that can lead to high demand of orders. branding strategy; having the customer centered on new product development; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> low competitive strength; if we talk about the launching of superior versions of the product, then there is a possibility of having few additional features in comparison with other products that are already on the market; lack of usability or any of its attributes; during the product lifecycle, we definitely have a decline stage.

OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - currently aspects of technology development and innovation; - possibility of expanding on other market niches; - outreaches the competitors vulnerabilities; - reaches the trends that are developing in the industry and in the lifestyle of the public. 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low demand on software market; - high competition with other software companies.
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7.2. SWOT Price

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - having discounts; - payment terms and financing options; - leasing options; - flexibility; - geographic terms. 	WEAKNESS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the existence of fixed and variable costs; - consumers are not to high prices - low possibility of expanding when addressing to only one category of age.
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - usually at a maturity level in the product lifecycle, the price is used to match or beat its competitors. - establishing a value-based pricing, meaning that the price is not established at the end of the marketing mix process, but along with the other marketing variables. 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - competitive prices; - practicing too high prices;

7.3. SWOT Place

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distribution channels, such as direct, retail, distributors & intermediates; - motivating the channel – for example, distributor margins; - criteria for evaluating distributors; - locations; - integrated logistics management, including transportation, warehousing, order fulfilment, intermodal transportation. - service levels; - recruiting intermediaries; 	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ways of transportation cannot be always trustworthy; - waste of valuable time in transportation;
OPPORTUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of vertical marketing systems (VMS), which is a distribution channel structure, in which, producers, wholesalers and retailers act as an unified system. - possibility of developing the multichannel distribution system. 	THREATS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - possibly developing problems related to the multiple intermediary levels, from the indirect marketing channel; - channel conflicts: disagreement among marketing channel members on goals and roles – who should do what and for what rewards.

7.4. SWOT Promotion

STRENGTHS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - advertising; - public relations; - promotional programs; - projected results of the promotional programs; - training; - motivation; - targets; - kinds of ads; - media type; - copy thrust; - sales promotion; - direct marketing. 	WEAKNESSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - high costs on advertising budget; - different promotion ways have different limitations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Television: high absolute cost, less audience, selectivity; b) Newspapers: short life, poor reproduction quality; c) Direct mail: relatively high cost per exposure d) Magazines: high cos and no guarantee of position; e) Radio: low attention, audio only. f) Internet: relatively low impact, creative limitations.
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OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - integrated marketing communications (IMC); - possibility of extending to nonpersonal communication channels; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -word of mouth influence might have a negative impact on the company. It represents the personal communication about a product between target buyers and neighbors, friends, family members and associates.

In order to sum up the marketing strategies found in the previous chapters, the following table has been realized. The following strategies represent the most important marketing strategies that are related to the User Centered Process. Basically, from the general analysis of the Marketing Strategies related to Price, Product, Place and Promotion, resulted these examples of more specific marketing activities that could be further included as activities in the User Centered Process, table 1.

Table 1 List of Marketing activities that can be in UCD Process

Number	Name
1	Setting up a customer-oriented mind-set
2	Buyers' Search
3	Recognizing the needs of buyers
4	Setting up the market segments
5	Analysing consumer behaviour
6	Examine the macroeconomic environment
7	Analysing the markets
8	Analysing the competitors
9	Analysing the public
10	Analysing the organization-related factors
11	Performing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
12	Providing marketing information
13	Consideration of Branding and Advertising in the context of User Experience
14	Detection of target Objectives
15	Advertising
16	Setting up prices
17	Storage and Delivery

8. Conclusions

The marketing activities that were obtained during the previous chapter will be integrated in the User Centered Design Process that was established in the ISO 9241:210 and also in the ISO 9126, trying to extend it with the new activities that were discovered and also trying to extend them with other usability activities. For future work, a competitive analysis of the representations found in the previous section will be conducted in the form of one summary table specifying, for each strategy, its strengths, weaknesses and gaps facing the analysis and design under User Centered Process Model. Also, strategies will be transformed into activities focused on the development of software within a MPCD for which I would group those activities necessary in the steps set out in the MP, define sub-activities or specific tasks for each activity, followed by tools and techniques.

Furthermore, the term of attractiveness will be defined, as being the quality software characteristic realized by the extension of the anterior model process.

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