

**MARKETING PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR APPIN TECHNOLOGY LAB JABALPUR –  
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY****Dr. Astha Bhanot***Asst. Prof. Dept. of Commerce's, Aloysius College (Auto) Jabalpur M.P.***Abstract**

*The current shift in the marketing strategies adopted by different companies and sectors are at its boom. It is now high end (rather than adaptive) development that is being carried out by leading companies. Companies in different sectors are working with new innovated promotional strategies to continue its existence in the market. Marketing is a composite of many activities related to customer need, fulfillment and satisfaction. Marketing is not limited to tangible goods, but can be for various types of entities – goods, services, events, organizations, information, experiences and ideas. Promotion is the method to spread the word about the product or service to customers, stakeholders and the broader public. This would help in identifying the target market, to have a good idea of the best way to reach them, but most business use a mix of advertising, personal selling, referrals, sales promotion and public relations to promote their products and services.*

*My study focuses on the process and outcomes of the educational sector in Jabalpur with specific relevance to Appin Technology Lab. This article will present the changing marketing strategies of the educational sector. This research paper will also give an insight about the promotional strategies adopted by the institute and end customer perception which is the base of formulation of different marketing strategies for effective implementation.*

**Keywords:** *Marketing, Promotion, Appin Technology, Strategies.*

**1. Introduction**

Intensive and extensive marketing development has led to the use of marketing concept evolves beyond the scope of the usual goods and services (Balaure, V. et al., 2002). Gradually, from commercial area, the principles of marketing have taken shape in other sectors as well, non-profit activities. Marketing is not only used for companies looking for profit, but also non-profit organizations such as educational institutions, museums, churches, charitable organizations, that want to attract customers, volunteers and funds etc. In recent years, educational institutions have been influenced by the marketed approach. Although many academics and personnel of educational institutions are likely to view marketing as compromising intellectual freedom, they know their markets and effectively distribute them to various publics and markets to survive and succeed. If they don't promote themselves, several educational institutions will be closed in the few years alone under competitive market environment.

**1.1. Literature Review**

Kotler (1995) stated in his book Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions. The handbook is for academics and practitioners who want to understand what marketing is, how it can contribute to their institutions' greater effectiveness, and how to do it. This revised edition, like its predecessor, provides a solid background in marketing in the context of educational institutions and their essential activities. Tripathi & Mukerji (2013) discussed in their book Marketing Strategies for Higher Education Institutions. Although higher education institutes are not typically thought of as a business, colleges and universities utilize marketing strategies in order to compete for students. Information and communication technologies have enhanced and changed the nature and context of communication exchange, allowing for a broader range of competition. Marketing Strategies for Higher Education Institutions: Technological Considerations and Practices provide different aspects of marketing management and technological innovations in all parts of education, including K-12, non-formal, and distance education. Highlighting research studies, experiences, and cases on educational marketing, this book is essential for educational planners, administrators, researchers, and marketing practitioners involved in all aspects of educational development. Tripathi & Mukerji (2011), The International Journal of Technology and Educational

Marketing (IJTEM) presents, analyzes, shares, and collaborates ideas, experiences, research studies, and cases on the advancements and innovations in technology and educational marketing. Targeting educational planners, administrators, researchers, educational technologists, educational specialists, and marketing educators, IJTEM uses technology and marketing management for sustainable educational development. In addition to full-length research papers, this journal publishes insightful books reviews, case studies on educational institutions and their marketing initiatives across the globe, and technological initiatives taken by institutions for marketing their educational programs. Yu-Chuan Chen (2013), The study of marketing strategies of higher education institutions in Taiwan under competitive market environment. The purpose of this paper is to present relevant aspects of the marketing approach of higher education institutions' activities in current market conditions in Taiwan. This study utilized documentary and literature analysis technique to collect and analyze the various factors about marketing conditions and strategies of higher education institutions in Taiwan. The researcher hopes that marketing frameworks can be transplanted into the higher education environment through this research project in the future.

### **1.2. Objective of the study**

1. Determination of the importance of marketing strategies in the educational sector.
2. To find out the courses offered by Appin Technology Lab Jabalpur for the students (customers).
3. Identify the main difficulties faced by the institution during the marketing promotional strategies.
4. Determining the effect of marketing promotional strategies on the students (customers).

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this paper is to present relevant aspects of the marketing approach of educational institution and activities in current market conditions. This study utilized documentary and literature analysis technique to collect and analyze the various factors about marketing conditions and strategies of educational institution (Appin Technology Lab Jabalpur). The researcher hopes that marketing frameworks can be transplanted into the other educational institute's environment through this research project in the future. As this is training institute acts as a link between corporate and academic world.

### **1.4. Limitations of the Study**

1. This study was conducted only for one specific centre of Appin Technology Lab in Jabalpur. Hence, the results arrived from the study is applicable to the study area only and may not suit to the universe.
2. It is difficult to know the information given by the respondents is accurate; some respondents tend to give misleading information.

### **1.5. Research Design**

A research design is the frame work or a plan for a study that guides the collection and analysis of data. It is the blue print for conducting a research or completing the research study. It is that framework which keeps the research study relevant to the research problem and encourages economical procedures in conducting research. Research design helps in bridging the gap between promise and performance, collecting perfect data and enhances the ability of establishing cause and effect relations.

In this study exploratory research is been used as this is an investigation. An exploratory research focuses on the discovery of ideas and generally based on secondary data. It consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data is collected through a structured non disguised questionnaire which helped in revealing the facts of the study.

### **1.6. Research Methodology**

The study used a combination of descriptive and empirical research deign. The primary data was collected from sample size of 50 students of the educational institute by a structured questionnaire and another data collected from a structured interview from the centre head of Appin Technology Lab Jabalpur which helped in finding out the marketing strategies of educational institution/ training centers and conclusion of the same.

## 2. Meaning of Educational Marketing

The marketing application in education is known as the educational marketing. Kotler and Fox (1995) believes that educational marketing involves designing institutions to effectively meeting the identified needs and wants and use market price, communication and distribution to inform, motivate and serve the market. The particularities of marketing in education are explained by two reasons:

1. Education in most countries is a non-profit sector, therefore marketing concepts applied to the sector do not function as in the business sector, where the primary goal is profit making;
2. Education is a social need, therefore all peculiarities applicable to the social marketing and marketing of services apply to education (Nicolescu, 2009).

Therefore, educational marketing uses, besides the "4P" marketing mix of already known variables, 3 more components that can be a competitive advantage. Thus includes variables: "people", "physical evidence" and "process". They could be employed in the distribution, but as it assumes a special importance in this area, it is appropriate to give them a place in the marketing mix classic.

The value of marketing principles to help solve educational problems in educational institutions is addressed. Marketing application of educational institutions in the field of educational services is known as educational marketing, component of social marketing. Some experts believe that marketing orientation should be developed as a business model. But there are few studies to construct marketing indicators and strategies of educational institutions.

The purpose of this paper is to present relevant aspects of the marketing approach of educational institution and activities in current market conditions. This study utilized documentary and literature analysis technique to collect and analyze the various factors about marketing conditions and strategies of educational institution (Appin Technology Lab Jabalpur). The researcher hopes that marketing frameworks can be transplanted into the other educational institute's environment through this research project in the future. As this is training institute acts as a link between corporate and academic world.

## 3. Marketing Strategies of Educational Sector

Everything in the world today needs to be marketed well; even education, hence marketing strategies are very much important. In order to create a lasting impact on the minds of the target audience/ students, educational institutions offering certificate and diploma programs need to be a cut above the rest. Education is a service and any service needs to be marketed well to be attractive to the consumer, who in this case is a student. It is a cluttered world out there, and to be noticed, any educational institution will need to break through. A lot of educational institutions today are adopting different marketing strategies which have become an especially volatile market. Many educational institutions are using web based ads and promotions aggressively for marketing their courses; the internet being a relatively cheaper advertising medium, has taken over the other traditional mediums like print and TV. Pop-up ads, email and banners are, however, mainly mass marketing tools and are largely ineffective. What education needs right now is relationship marketing?

Relationship marketing is essentially establishing, developing and maintaining successful long term relationships with students. Education being a service cannot adopt marketing strategies meant for a manufactured product. Marketing educational services is more about building trust and commitment, more about making students loyal alumnus. Marketing strategies deal with the creation of a product that cannot be copied by anyone else, and with creating an atmosphere of nurture for student's right from the enquiry stage. For the student, any educational institution is attractive if it has the right mix of pricing, academic experience, and credibility. If an institution is able to provide services beyond these three parameters, it has earned the loyalties of any student enrolled with it.

## 4. Discussion

**Appin Technology Lab**, currently a network of 110+ training labs provides comprehensive training in **Information Security**, and related technology areas including Embedded Robotics, Programming (Microsoft

.NET, Java, PHP), Networks, Database and has been operating training centers across India, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, South America and Middle East. Appin also runs online training programs in North America, Western Europe and Australia. We are among top 5 IT professional training companies and the best in its category by the popular The Week magazine.

Frost & Sullivan estimated that there are 2.28 million information security professionals worldwide. This figure is expected to increase to nearly 4.2 million by 2015. Budgets and spending are expected to increase in the next 12 months, and salaries showed healthy growth despite a global recession. Current worldwide growth rate is billed at 21%. Higher salaries are been offered to professionals in IT security. **Information security** industry is currently over \$100 B (\$60 B in US, \$ 20B UK, \$4.5 B Japan, over \$1.5 B India).

Besides the expertise in Information Security training programs, Appin runs a number of allied technology oriented courses such as **Java programming, Microsoft .Net, PHP/My SQL programming, Networks & Networking, Embedded systems, Robotics, Degree programs such as BCA, MBA** etc. Not all courses are available at all centers and make sure you speak to center's counselor before making plans.

In Jabalpur Appin Technology Lab was launched in 2008 which was one of the franchise of the main headquarters in New Delhi. Team did the good job and first 6 months itself they enrolled 260 students in short and long term courses. And till today 5000+ candidates are trained in various programme with minimum course duration of 6 months and maximum duration of 2 years. Many outstation students also come for the courses in the institute. Different Jobs are provided by the institution with the help of tie ups with international and national companies like IBM, Motorola, Google, Flextronics, Cordys, Oracle, Tech Mahindra, Satyam, Idea, HCl, Virtusa, TATA, NCR, SEEC etc. The students are provided jobs such as Software Developers, PHP Developer, .NET Developer, Java Developer and Network Security. Microsoft is the academic partner of Appin Technology Lab. Appin Courses is an initiative to bridge the gap between industry and academia by integration of learning and technology. The certificate, diploma courses and program is aimed to equip its students with all the necessary knowledge, theoretical as well as practical, which can benefit them tremendously in managerial and administrative jobs.

#### 4.1 Reasons to Join Appin

1. Over half a decade of experience in IT & Security training over seventy cities and hundred plus centers affecting lives of over eighty-three thousand students.
2. Training partnerships with recognized govt and international bodies including STQC, MSU, TMV, IADL among others.
3. Global leaders in Information security training program with over fourteen thousand students placed world-wide.
4. Economical training programs that fulfills college & school summer training requirements.
5. Job placement assistance available after graduation including first preference for over 78 companies fresher job postings.
6. 63.4% of all students who have done training with Appin have been placed within 3 months of course, remaining also have placed in due course of time.
7. Appin is among **top 5 IT training companies in South Asia** (The Week magazine) and a venture of alumni & professors from prestigious IITs.
8. Appin Security Group is among the largest recruiter in Information Security, Application Programming and Embedded Robotics.

#### 4.2. How is Appin different from other Educational and Training Institutions?

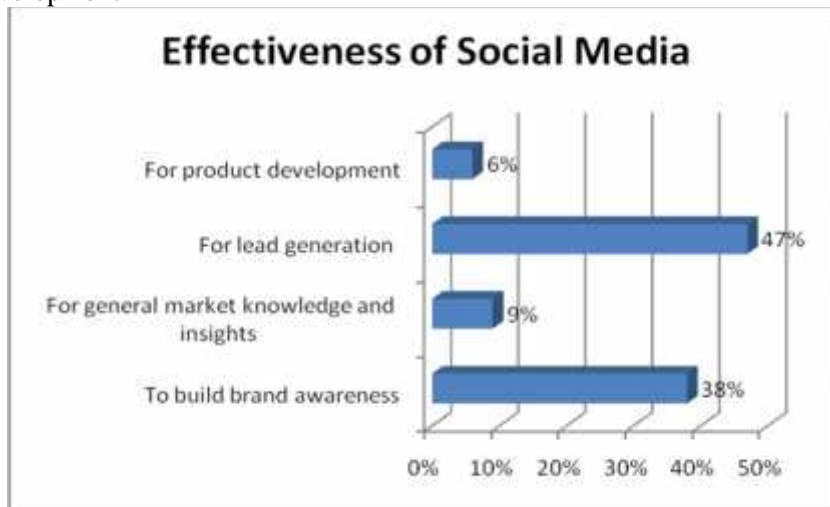
1. Rated among the top 5 IT professional Course Offerings in India- The Week Magazine.
2. Appreciated by the former President of India Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam at RashtrapatiBhawan for the entrepreneurial spirits and flagship products on Information Security and Nanotechnology.

3. First one in the world to launch CBTs certification course in Nanotechnology, Information Security, Embedded System & Robotics.
4. First one to author book in India on Nanotechnology, Robotics, Information Security along with BPB Publications.
5. Reached over 83,000 customers via training programs and products.
6. Training programs, products sold in over 71 countries.
7. Approved by the International Association of Distance Learning (IADL), UK
8. Corporate training partners of companies including Microsoft, Accenture, American Express, Convergys, BSNL etc.
9. Education partners with Microsoft Academic, IBM Finishing School, Manipal Universal Pvt. Ltd, Gurukul online Pvt. Ltd.
10. Network of over 75+ premium centers in World Wide.

### 5. Analysis

This data was collected from the institutional head to understand how is educational institution is using social media. It was a structured interview which helped in investigating the marketing strategies opted by the educational institute was successful and it also helped in findings the conclusion.

- Does your organization currently using social media to connect with your customers and prospects?  
Yes they are using print and non print media to get connected to their customers. The institution is already working on the plan and has many other developing strategies for future.
- For what purpose are you finding social media to be very effective?
  1. To build brand awareness
  2. For general market knowledge and insights
  3. For lead generation
  4. For product development

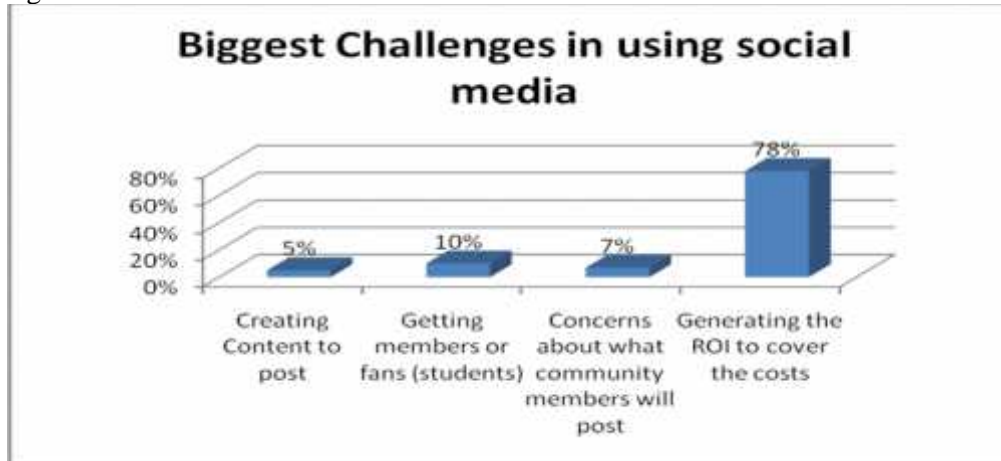


**Fig. 1: Effectiveness of Social Media**

In this question the maximum weight age was given for lead generation with 47% followed with the build brand awareness with 38%. General market knowledge and insights were with 9% and product development with 6% of response from the investigation.

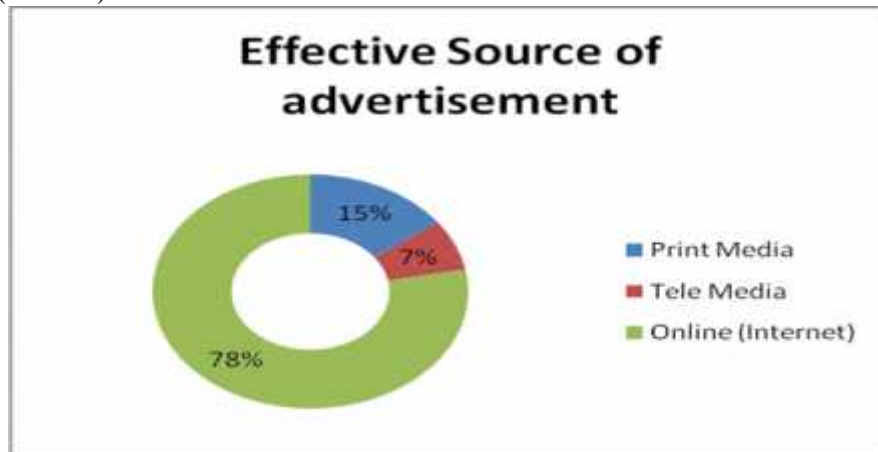
- What are the biggest challenges in using social media?
  1. Creating Content to post
  2. Getting members or fans (students)
  3. Concerns about what community members will post

4. Generating the ROI to cover the costs



In this question the institute’s biggest challenge was generating the ROI to cover the costs with 78% of the challenge followed with 10% with getting the members or fans (students) and 7% of concerns about what the members will post. Finally with the rest 5% of creating content to post every time.

- Which source of advertisement is most effective to attract customers?
  1. Print Media
  2. Tele Media
  3. Online (Internet)



**Fig. 2: Effective Source of Advertisement**

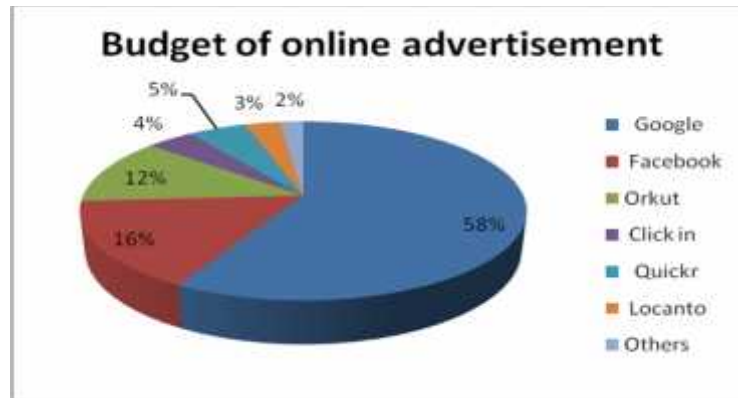
According to the centre head the most effective way to attract customers is an online (internet) because most students use internet and they find it easy to get details and information about the institute and courses. 70% of the response is through online – internet whereas non print media includes tele calling and messaging as 20% response and print media which incurs the highest amount of budget gives the least amount of response as 10% only.

- Which of the following categories of tools are very effective as part of your marketing program according to the budget?
  1. Print Media
  2. Tele Media
  3. Online (Internet)

As per the center head they are spending approximately Rs 180,000 per annum for online (internet) as it is an IT based institution. Whereas Tele Media includes tele calling, messaging and tele media scrolls and spots this cost

Rs. 180,000 per annum and Print Media includes advertisements in newspapers and pamphlets, etc. which involves the double amount i.e. Rs. 360,000.

- Types of Online Advertisement Budget include:
  1. Google
  2. Facebook
  3. Orkut
  4. Click in
  5. Quickr
  6. Locanto
  7. Others



**Fig. 3: Budget of online Advertisement**

As per the institute they are emphasizing more on online (internet) because they get more leads as compared to print and non print media. Therefore they invest in Google with 58%, Facebook with 16%, Orkut with 12%, Click in 4%, Quickr with 5% ,Locanto with 3% and Others sites with rest 2% of the budget.

The second structured questionnaire was taken by the 50 students of the institute so as to analysis the marketing strategies followed by the educational institute were able to contact and attract the customers.

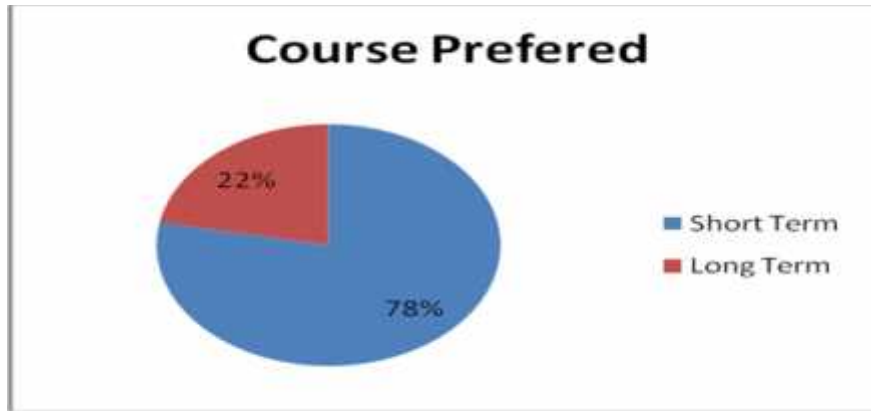
- Category of students involved in the leads of the courses?

**Table 1: Category of Students in the leads of the courses**

| Category of students | %age |
|----------------------|------|
| CS                   | 51%  |
| IT                   | 37%  |
| EC                   | 5%   |
| BCA                  | 4%   |
| MCA                  | 2%   |
| Others               | 1%   |

Generally engineering students of CS, IT, EC and BCA, MCA as well as other streams are included with a percentage of 51, 37, 5, 4, 2 and 1% respectively. CS and IT students are more interested as it is related to their area of work and for specific knowledge which helps in getting better job for them. Very few students of non professional courses with 1% students take leads in the institute when they do not get the job opportunity in their area of work.

- Which type of course is more preferred
  1. Short Term
  2. Long Term



**Fig. 4: Courses Preferred by the students**

Customers / Students are more interested in short term courses with maximum 78% and less students are interested in long term courses with 22%. Because short term course cost less due to certificate or diploma course and duration is also 6 months whereas long term course is costly due to degree course and duration is also 2 years.

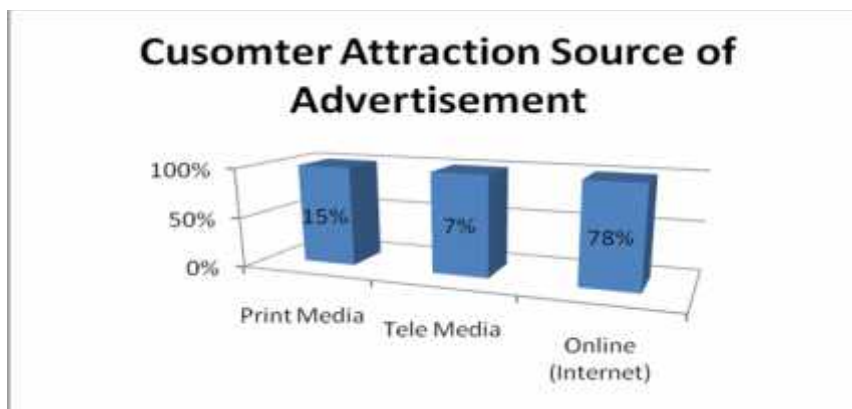
- Which type of courses are mostly preferred by the customers (students) –

**Table 2: Type of Courses preferred by the customers (students)**

| Courses Preferred                      | %age |
|--|------|
| Java                                   | 20%  |
| .Net                                   | 18%  |
| C & C++                                | 20%  |
| Information Security & Ethical Hacking | 60%  |
| Robotics Embedded                      | 4%   |

Maximum number of students are interested and prefer information security and ethical hacking with 60% whereas rest 36% are interested in languages like Java, C & C++ and . Net and Embedded Robotics with 4%.

- Which source of advertisement is most effective to attract customers?
  1. Print Media
  2. Tele Media
  3. Online (Internet)



**Fig. 5: Customer Attraction Source of Advertisement**

According to the customers the most effective way which attract the customers is an online (internet) because most students use internet and they find it easy to get details and information about the institute and courses. 78% of the response is through online – internet whereas non print media includes tele calling and messaging as 7%



response and print media which incurs the highest amount of budget gives the least amount of response as 15% only.

- Which types of Online Advertisement is more opted by the cutomers:
  1. Google
  2. Facebook
  3. Orkut
  4. Click in
  5. Quickr
  6. Locanto
  7. Others

As per the students mindset they get the maximum information from online (internet) because they get using this technique to get in touch with the world. They get maximum information from Google with 55%, Facebook with 21%, Orkut with 11%, Click in 4%, Quickr with 4% , Locanto with 3% and Others sites with rest 2%.

- Job Opportunity and Placements offered by the institute:
  1. Yes
  2. No

Maximum Students with 96% were happy with the job and placement opportunities provided by the institute as it has many collaboration with international and national companies likes HCL, IBM, TATA, Tech Mahindra, Microsoft, etc.

## 6. Conclusion

Appin Courses is an initiative to bridge the gap between industry and academia by integration of learning and technology. The certificate, diploma courses and program is aimed to equip its students with all the necessary knowledge, theoretical as well as practical, which can benefit them tremendously in managerial and administrative jobs.

Marketing Strategies used by the institute like print, online etc. As Appin is an IT training institute so it planned to reach its customers via internet. So the budget for online marketing is comparatively higher but it's cost effective if we compare with the other mode of advertisement. The 70% of the students search training programme on internet. They have many facebook, orkut pages to get in touch with students. They update these pages on daily basis. They have also taken Google ad words services to reach maximum users/ facebook advertisement – pay per click to get students lead. This pay per click gives them almost 90% pure lead and specific to the course. Click in, quickr, locanto, few others online marketing sites are also advertising the courses of the institute. They also have an online marketing wing with a team size of 3, these 3 people work almost 8 hrs a day and generate leads for training centre. Per day they get approx 30 leads and approx 600 a month. The final conversion is approx 10% means 60 a month. Generally feedback is normally taken from students after training and during training via facebook.

In this study, the result shows that the educational institution/training center have successfully assimilated marketing strategies from the private business sector and corporate sector to promote their services and products to improve customer satisfaction and attract students. The dimension of marketing is being put forth in the institution. 4P's strategies are used to promote educational/training institute, and the 4P's stand for promotion, price, people and product.

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