

*Jaroslav Kita**, *Marta Grossmanová**, *Pavol Kita**

MARKETING ASPECTS OF MARKET ORIENTATION OF SLOVAK INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISES IN PURCHASING

Orientation on market is becoming a new instrument of modern industrial enterprises with regard to the fact that the speed of response to the behaviour of customers, suppliers and competition requires mastering a great amount of information which is important for the formulation of an enterprise marketing policy. At the same time it concerns the core of problem solving of a marketing manager, who is wishing to change the company culture in the sphere of purchase in favour of one which is more market oriented. The approach of the article is characterized by two levels: a theoretical one, which presents the synthesis of present scientific knowledge on this specific problem, and an operational one, which is presented by the research results, illustrating and explaining the concept of market orientation in the purchase sphere of industrial enterprises. The company culture is closely connected with training of workers in the purchase sphere. Improving of professionalism and competence of buyers has an increasing strategic character. In connection with this development, within the project ESF, the University of Economics in Bratislava in cooperation with the University of Pierre Mendes France in Grenoble offers an international university study programme of Sales Management in French, the project Code 131 201 20293 JPD 3 2005/NP1-036 aimed at the education of experts in the purchase sphere. At the same time this topic is linked to the scientific-research task VEGA 1/0228//08 New Approaches to the Management of Supply Industrial Enterprises.

Keywords: market orientation concept, purchase of industrial enterprises, suppliers, market research, competitiveness

1. INTRODUCTION

Under the conditions of turbulent changes of industrial, trading and technological environment, there is a change in the principle of enterprise functioning from the orientation on customer to market orientation. Especially, making traditional distribution channels doubtful, a direct contact of suppliers and customers and dynamic launching of new products to the market emphasize the necessity of this orientation with the aim of increasing

* University of Economics in Bratislava

enterprise competitiveness. An enterprise orientated on the market should also take into account the relations with suppliers as participants of exchange. The quality of relations of an enterprise with the main suppliers is becoming a competitive advantage, namely in the market of production sphere with regard to the fact that the function of purchase is a strategic factor, because its impact on enterprise performance is high in many aspects and it serves the development policy of each enterprise.

This article offers the hypotheses on the position of purchase in market orientation of enterprise and also provides the results of research that are the basis for diagnosing and evaluating an enterprise's development as far as the position of purchase in a specific type of enterprise is concerned. The topic of this article refers to the core of solution of the problem of marketing manager in the purchase sphere who wishes to change the corporate culture in this sphere in favour of market orientation.

1.1. Market Orientation of Enterprise and Purchase

At present, the customers themselves, although being the centre of attention of marketing philosophy, are not the only factors in the market to condition the functioning and trading and financial performance of enterprise. Marketing policy of enterprises is influenced not only by the growing power of distributors in the market with consumer goods, great intensity of international competition, rapid development of technology, launching innovated products and shortening their life cycle, but also by the growing influence of suppliers in the industrial market.

Cooperation with suppliers and their integration in the marketing process is becoming inevitable for ensuring the development of new competitive advantages.

In this twofold context the basic marketing metamorphosis is being realized: to substitute a widely spread conception and practice of orientation towards a customer through the market orientation concept that integrates the standpoints of customers, suppliers, distributors, technologies and competition.

The above-mentioned shows that the market orientation concept is a transversal including also the strategy, marketing, organization, management of human resources and corporate culture. But, according to the title of the concept, it serves mainly the orientation, while e.g. the strategy and its means serve rather the preference of specific strategic procedures. This means that

market orientation has its important place in different enterprise strategies, but it is not itself a strategy. From the point of transversality of conception some authors differentiate several forms of market orientation: directed at a customer, at partial markets, at competitors /growth of market share/ etc.

The concept of market orientation is a relatively old one and has its origin in the considerations on marketing philosophy. The first considerations on this topic appeared in the years 1954-1960 in the works of P. Drucker: *Practice of Management* 1954 (Lambin, 1965, p. 329), Th. Levitt: *Marketing Myopia* 1960 (Kennedy, 2002, p.173) and R. Keith: *The Marketing Revolution* 1960 (Kotler, Dubois, Manceau, 2004, p. 800). If an exact determination of the origin and targets of orientation is relatively changeable, then, on the contrary, the works of E. J. McCarthy and D. J. Perreault, 1984 (Usunier, Easterly-Smith, Thorpe, 2000, p. 233) show clearly that marketing philosophy puts an emphasis on profitability which is secured by the enterprise activities aiming to satisfy customer needs.

Only recently has this vital concept also become interesting for current enterprises. In the expert literature from the given period, the concept of market orientation is a starting point of different considerations on the development of marketing without being clearly identified and presented in its globality, with regard to the fact that the works on marketing dealt relatively little with the organizational questions, although the concept of market orientation has many connections with the enterprise organization. Already Th. Levitt (Levitt, 1960) emphasized the importance of internal enterprise organization that could more effectively respond to the changes of customer needs and values.

In April 1993, A.K. Kohli and B.J. Javorski in the article *Market Orientation* (Javorski, Kohli, 1993: 53-70) published the first work dealing with applying marketing philosophy in an enterprise and thus they defined the concept of market orientation. According to the above-mentioned authors, an enterprise orientated on the market is an enterprise the activities of which are coherent marketing philosophy. In October of the same year J.C.Narver and S.F.Slater (Narver, Slater, 1990, pp. 20-34) suggested the scale of measuring the concept of market orientation, thus making it possible to test and measure the impact of marketing philosophy on the performance of an enterprise. Generally, we can say that since 1990 the number of works dealing with the concept of market orientation and different ways of its measuring has doubled (Šimberová, Nejezchleb, 2000, pp. 70-74).

The concept of market orientation is not limited only to operational advantages but it is also connected with its theoretical contribution. Defining its relation to marketing is not an easy thing (Čihovská, Kita, 2005, pp. 612-625), because the concept concerns the very limitation of marketing which lies in three pillars: orientation towards a customer, profit and marketing management, which is in fact identical to the concept of market orientation. Regarding the fact that it is customary to differentiate its three dimensions – the operational dimension (winning the market on the basis of know-how marketing), managerial dimension (organizational attitude) and philosophical dimension (business philosophy) which takes understanding and satisfying needs of the market for the determining principles of enterprise performance, then the inquiry about the market orientation and its impact on enterprise performance is in fact an inquiry about the impact of marketing on performance (Morton, 1995, p. 321). So, there are two levels of marketing in relation to which the market orientation can be situated:

- marketing as a set of instruments making it possible to harmonize the offer of an enterprise with its customers,
- marketing as an enterprise philosophy and relations which an enterprise maintains with its customers.

Whilst in the 1970s the milestone of marketing was consumer behaviour, at present it is the marketing relation dimension, which prevails. From the above mentioned we can see that the concept of market orientation can be understood as:

- an equivalent of marketing concept, especially from a philosophical aspect,
- part of marketing, because, besides disposing of the managerial aspect, it is also understood as a whole of activity instruments,
- the main concept including the very marketing defined by the American Marketing Association (Sheth, Sisodia, 2006, p. 105) as a process of planning and realization of concept, prices, marketing communication and distribution of ideas, products and services from the point of view of making an exchange and satisfying goals of individuals and enterprises (Gröönroos, 1989, p. 54).

To better understand the contribution of market orientation and its distinguishing from marketing, it is necessary to take into consideration the pragmatic consequences of the concept (as far as the influence on behaviour is concerned) from practical and academic points of view.

From a practical point of view the concept of market orientation strengthens the interest of managers in maintaining and the mobilization of an enterprise in realising its goals. From an academic point of view, in spite of

small differences between the definitions of market orientation and traditional marketing definitions, the concept of market orientation represents a new object of theoretical research. This means that, while marketing as an academic discipline has a reflexive and theoretical character, the new substance of the subject matter lies in the fact that it is a research of global, complex, organizational, transversal phenomenon as for its relations with other characteristics of enterprise and consumption. The transversality of the subject matter under study can initiate problems connected with its understanding and research.

At present, market orientation is the main concept of marketing in the purchase sphere from the operational as well as theoretical viewpoints. Many enterprises apply purchase marketing with the aim of foreseeing and actively influencing the relations of exchange in the purchase market and stimulate the market supply in the direction of enterprise needs.

The results of research in the environment of industrial enterprises on the territory of the Slovak Republic (Kita, 2006, pp. 78-92) make it possible to better know their operational interest in improving the factors of market orientation in purchase and to better manage the theory of purchase with the aim of strengthening their competitiveness and to take a position in the markets of the European Union.

2. ORIENTATION ON SUPPLIERS AND PURCHASE MARKETING

Orientation towards suppliers as one of the aspects of market orientation is a result of multiplication of researches concerning market orientation, which made the scientists in the sphere in question widen its original manifestations by this component. The quality of this relation between a producer and his major suppliers is becoming a competitive advantage, mainly in the sphere of industry. Numerous enterprises are practicing research marketing to stimulate suppliers to an offer of such solutions which are better accommodated to the expectations of customers (buyers). The new aspect of enterprise behaviour, i.e. orientation on suppliers, is defined as the ability and willingness of an enterprise to stimulate suppliers on the basis of partnership, to better satisfy the demand addressed to them to better satisfy customer needs. Partnership, which must be permanent, should be profitable for both parties.

Strengthening of development of industry in Europe has become the priority at the level of the European Union as well as at national level. Enterprises in the territory of Slovakia, gradually increasing their activity

within the European territory, must regularly develop their business performance in the purchase sphere. From a medium-term point of view they try to start numerous contacts with domestic and foreign suppliers, verify the competitiveness of their supply resources to approach the strategy which all enterprises must follow due to the globalization of the economy. Emphasizing the importance of purchase is a consequence of transformation of the centralized economy to the market economy. Purchase is a basic function of enterprise due to two reasons:

1. It creates more than 50% of turnover of industrial enterprises. This is the reason why each activity which makes it possible to decrease the costs by 5% in the purchase sphere must be potentially more profitable than the activities aimed at improving the productivity in the production sphere

2. Relations between suppliers and customers are being internationalized and purchase is becoming a centre of attention (Kita, Grossmanová, Kita, 2005, pp. 5-22). The method of purchase itself is changing and enterprises tend to cooperate. Such a development requires a high level of professionalization to apply the purchase function effectively.

As early as in the 19th century, American railway companies stressed the important role of purchase. In spite of that, the acknowledgement of this role in Europe required some time before it was clear that purchase does not only cause costs but it is also a source of enterprise profit. Only as late as in the 1980s did the first definitions of purchase marketing appear and from then onwards the operative and strategic aspects of this function have been emphasized.

Before the nineties, under our conditions, the economy was directed by supply, today it is directed by demand. In the permanently increasing competitive environment the only means of profit growing is cutting costs in the purchase sphere. The position of purchase in an enterprise clearly shows what an enterprise does to be successful in the ever-increasing competitive environment and at the same time it is an indicator of the present and future performance of enterprise.

The more the purchase costs tend to rise the higher the contribution of the purchase marketing model will be for an enterprise. The main aim of enterprise interest is to be competitive under these conditions. This means that it is necessary to act against this increase with the aim of stabilization or a decrease of costs. To reach this aim, an enterprise must not be passive and it should use purchase marketing. The purchase-marketing model can also be a contribution under the conditions of new purchase, resp. modified repeat

purchase, as well as under the conditions of competition in the purchase sphere. In this context it is necessary to research the supply market and prepare for business negotiations. The effectiveness of the purchase marketing procedure can also be seen in other situations, such as the development of prices in the market, the prevailing offer of inputs in the supply market with the aim of getting the best ratio quality/price, conjunctural economic development, which requires a reaction of the enterprise to different possible situations, growth of market sphere, which is determined by better control of costs and global expansion in the market.

The concept of market orientation in an enterprise is reflected in its individual parts. It is relatively hard to say which the key factors in the market orientation on the basis of which we could judge the market orientation situation of enterprise in this sphere with regard to the size of influencing factors are. The factors which are able to influence the market orientation in the purchase sphere can be e.g.: the size of enterprise, the branch in which an enterprise functions, degree of cooperation between the spheres and existence of the purchase sphere, elements of structure (centralization, decentralization of purchase), system of purchase coordination, control system, strategic purchase priorities, human factor, etc.

3. RESULTS OF MARKET ORIENTATION RESEARCH IN THE PURCHASE SPHERE

The basic information in the article reached on the basis of analysis of the questionnaire data characterizes the concept of market orientation with the example of purchase. The questionnaire was made with the aim to create a survey of the logics of enterprise functioning in the purchase sphere towards market orientation, i.e. of the factors which characterize this orientation with regard to the size of enterprise, organizational context, instruments, working methods, human factor, etc. as well as with regard to the opinions on the purchase function which exist in different types of enterprises in the Slovak Republic. Taking into account the fact that market orientation in this context is analyzed only with regard to the aspect of purchase, the research used the following principles that the market orientation:

- in the purchase sphere is concentrated on the supply market,
- enables an organizational innovation and is also reflected in the fact that the enterprise members should participate in the mechanism of preparation of purchase decisions,

- is a process integrating the collection of information, its transmission within an enterprise and has practical impacts on enterprise activity.

A survey was conducted from 1 March 2005 till 31 May 2005 in 581 enterprises of different sizes with regard to the fact that the size of an enterprise is one of the factors of market orientation, i.e. in 147 micro enterprises, 165 small enterprises, 154 medium size enterprises and in 115 large enterprises. The mentioned enterprises are active in different branches and their customers are enterprises in the market of production sphere, resp. distribution organizations. The research has a directed stochastic character to preserve an approximate ratio between individual size types of enterprises.

Market orientation is related to the organization of purchase and should make the organizational innovation easier. In this direction the research results show that medium size enterprises gradually catch up with the large ones (73% of medium size enterprises and 89% of large enterprises close down the purchase department), but as many as 62% of small enterprises do not dispose of it. We can say that purchase does not yet have the symptoms of appreciation: the function in some enterprises is depreciated and enterprise management neglects it. In small enterprises purchase departments are still a new thing, only 39% of them close down purchase department and 11% of large enterprises do not close them down. The research shows that smaller enterprises think that they dispose of the purchase department, if a worker is at the same time in charge of purchase, supply and logistics. In spite of that, if purchase is secured by the enterprise manager, production manager, quality worker, they are of the opinions that they do not dispose of purchase department. The size of an enterprise is a determining criterion of existence of purchase department (Table 1).

Table 1
Existence of purchase departments in enterprises

	Micro enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium size enterprises	Large enterprises
Yes	15.17%	39.00%	73.20%	88.70%
No	84.83%	61.00%	26.80%	11.30%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: our own research

Table 2

Average number of workers working in the purchasing department

	Micro enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium size enterprises	Large enterprises
Average number	1.96	2.49	4.08	12

Source: our own research

In the enterprises that do not dispose of purchasing department the number of workers in charge of purchase is increasing with regard to the size of an enterprise. In this enterprise the purchase function is often ensured by the enterprise manager, production manager, resp. operation manager. Using the results, we can accept several organizational models. Purchase, e.g. is ensured by 1-2 persons (Table 2). In this case he is the enterprise manager and the second person is the production manager or the manager's assistant. This is usually the case of micro enterprises and small enterprises.

If there are more persons in charge of purchase, the enterprise manager can even in this case intervene in the purchase process, but less systematically than in the previous case. They are the production managers, resp. workers in charge of supply, who intervene more often. If there is an independent purchase department, the number of workers in charge of purchase is smaller (which is logical) than in enterprises not having this department.

The size of the purchase department is changing according to the size of enterprise. If the purchase department is sufficiently large, it usually integrates a worker for supply, resp. an assistant, which depends on a specific enterprise. Division of labour is realized either with regard to the group of products purchased, resp. there is a separation of purchase from supply. Smaller enterprises prefer the first solution. The second one is typical for large enterprises. In each case, the division of labour depends on the tasks the enterprise is solving. We can say that the size of an enterprise and the variety of tasks (the number of the items purchased) help the existence of purchasing department. In spite of that the complexity of purchase (e.g. imports) need not help its existence. If an enterprise disposes of a purchasing department, the number of persons in charge of purchase is smaller than in the opposite case.

The existence of market orientation in purchase is conditioned by purchasing policy, which defines the rules and principles of purchase and makes the basis of effectiveness in purchase due to different reasons:

- It is a condition of each purchase rationalization, as it expresses the willingness of a manager to improve purchase in the enterprise.

- It makes a framework of activity of functioning of the purchase function, which influences turnover and has an important impact on the quality of products and image of enterprise.
- It determines the criteria and goals of purchase in enterprise.
- In 43% of micro enterprises, 21% of small enterprises, 11% of middle-size enterprises and 10% of large enterprises, the purchase policy is not formulated, which can be a result of the existence of enterprise-wide policy, which is formulated generally for the whole enterprise and which does not take purchase as a priority.
- Total policy of enterprise is often applied rather to sales than to purchase.
- Purchase policy can often have an intuitive character and for this reason its is rarely used as a management instrument.

The existence of a purchase policy is rather related to the volume of enterprise turnover. This is logical with regard to the fact that purchase is becoming a strategic element and it represents an important part of price of produced products. In spite of that, it need not be connected with the complexity of purchased inputs. The content of purchase policy is to a great extent differentiated by enterprises. According to the results of research this policy of enterprise management has an influence upon: decreasing the purchase costs, determining the criteria of priority purchases (quality, flexibility, reliability), improving the relation quality/price of purchased products, improving settlements of suppliers etc.

The majority of enterprises emphasize the importance of purchase policy that should result in the fact that enterprises should dispose of the system of measuring purchase performance. This is logical because to be able to measure the performance, first it is necessary to define the direction of purchase. But in all the surveyed enterprises they do not revise the purchase policy by measuring the performance of the purchase departments, i.e. they do not deal with its application (Table 3).

Table 3

The state of measuring purchase performance in different types of enterprises

	Micro enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium size enterprises	Large enterprises
Yes	5.45%	12.13%	19.48%	44.35%
No	94.55%	87.87%	80.52%	55.65%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: our own research

In the enterprises in which the management determines the main directions of purchasing policy and purchasing strategy, they dispose mostly of the system of indicators of measuring purchase performance. This is logical because to be able to measure performance, it is necessary first to define the direction of purchase from the very beginning. Only 21.54% of enterprises dispose of the system of indicators of measuring purchase performance. We can say that the system of measuring purchase performance is increasing with the increasing size of enterprise, with the existence of purchase departments.

Market orientation includes not only an organizational aspect, but it is also a specific behaviour of an enterprise in relation to suppliers, and mainly a process which mobilizes the whole enterprise from the collection of information through the infusion of information in the enterprise to the response to the offers of suppliers and needs of customers. In this connection the use of purchase marketing, the preference of the purchase requirements and enterprise requirements in relation to suppliers makes it possible to find out the proportions in which individual phases of purchase marketing in enterprises are used and what is the level of the customer's offensive in the purchase sphere. The answer to the question of application of purchase marketing causes several problems, as enterprises are not always at the same level to respond to this question. For this reason the application of purchase marketing has been researched according to its individual phases (Table 4). The answers to individual phases of marketing show that the term "purchase marketing" is not totally unknown to Slovak production enterprises. But the enterprises, which characterized its application in general finally tend to a narrow concept of purchase marketing, i.e. they only choose some phases of marketing. The research results make it possible to concentrate on the determining limits of application of purchase marketing. These limits may be internal and external.

Internal limits of application of marketing can still be found in the mentioned insufficiently developed phases of realization of purchase marketing. In those enterprises which are realizing the phases of purchase marketing, the key activities are the analysis of needs, negotiation of purchase, resp. making contracts, plan of purchase, analysis and selection of purchase market. Enterprises pay the least attention to the creation and visualization of a purchase portfolio, which require adequate expert knowledge in the sphere of purchase strategy and analysis of strengths and weaknesses of enterprise purchase. Internal obstacles also include the responsibility for purchase and supply, education of purchasing managers and other obstacles. One of the important internal limits is the relation of purchase and supply. In this sphere an important

role is played by education of purchasing and marketing managers with the aim of improving their competence.

External limits of purchase marketing application can be related to the fact that suppliers are in a monopolistic position, state organs interfere with the economic sphere (customs regulations, regulations on foodstuffs, etc.), there is a low level of supplier market competition (Repková, 2007), etc.

The mentioned facts cannot be understood in a negative sense, as the purchase function is in a phase of development. Moreover, some interpretations of the research results prove that this development is not yet finished and that enterprises are starting a trend which corresponds with the perception of purchase as a strategic function of enterprise. Application of purchase marketing model depends on the human factor. At the same time, it is a change in the manner of thinking and also an improvement of its abilities.

Table 4
Utilization of the phases of purchase marketing in enterprises

	Micro enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium size enterprises	Large enterprises
Analysis of needs	13.88%	13.51%	14.42%	12.93%
Classification of purchases	9.54%	8.33%	9.94%	9.44%
Analysis and selection of purchase market	10.34%	10.34%	8.65%	11.18%
Creation and visualization of portfolio of purchase	5.17%	6.37%	5.45%	7.69%
Diagnostics of situation	7.53%	8.05%	8.01%	6.99%
Purchase mix	7.53%	4.89%	6.41%	6.64%
Purchase plan	11.50%	11.49%	12.82%	11.88%
Negotiation of purchase	13.09%	13.51%	14.10%	12.58%
Making a contract	12.69%	14.60%	14.11%	12.58%
Purchase marketing control	8.73%	8.91%	6.09%	8.09%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: own research

Purchase marketing access is based on an offensive and so it differs from a traditional purchase, which is based on production philosophy and is typical for its introversion and defensive access. 78% of large enterprises in contrast to 43% of micro enterprises often, resp. systematically apply their own purchase conditions in relation to suppliers. The relations which large enterprises maintain with suppliers evidently strengthen enterprise performance conditions. This means that enterprises less orientated on the market have a smaller profit than those which are much more orientated on suppliers. The most frequent requirements in relation to suppliers are quality, price, delivery time, way of invoicing, delivery terms, confidentiality of information, etc.

There are many possibilities how to organize purchase function in enterprises. But it is necessary to take into account an operational and conceptional harmonization of activities from purchase to sales with regard to the fact that human factor has a specific task in the concept of market orientation. 54% of small enterprises are fully satisfied with the purchase organization in the enterprise. The lowest degree of full satisfaction is expressed by large enterprises (13%). The prevailing majority of enterprises are quite satisfied with purchase organization, which could result in the opinion that market orientation in the purchase sphere is positively connected with satisfaction at work, with the atmosphere in the enterprise and with the quality of hierarchical relations. But the level of satisfaction presented by the mentioned research results is more connected with the degree of complains in individual enterprises than with the degree of purchase performance or the mentioned organization.

The great majority of enterprises take the time aspect for the basis of improvement of functioning and effectiveness of purchase organization (Table 5). Also the financial aspect and need of information about the supplier market (Tonkova, 2005, p. 84) are important factors of purchase performance. In spite of that, the support by the economic department, resp. recruitment of workers for full-time resp. part-time jobs, is required only in special cases. Better organization of purchase activity should help the functioning and effective organization of purchasing on average in 11% of cases.

Table 5
Criteria that could influence functioning and effectiveness of purchase organization in enterprises

	Micro enterprises	Small enterprises	Medium size enterprises	Large enterprises
More time to deal with this question	21.78%	25.28%	16.94%	20.85%
More prognostic activity concerning purchase	5.78%	4.46%	4.68%	7.11%
Better organization of purchasing activity	11.11%	13.38%	10.63%	9.95%
More educational possibilities	3.11%	4.83%	4.98%	9.95%
More information about supplier market	20.44%	11.90%	16.94%	12.80%
More competence	2.22%	4.09%	4.65%	7.58%
Programmes for purchase management	2.67%	5.58%	6.64%	5.21%
More financial means	21.33%	17.10%	16.28%	7.11%
Help of other people in full-time resp. part-time jobs	3.56%	3.35%	1.66%	2.84%
Better communication with other departments in enterprise	1.78%	3.35%	7.64%	8.06%
More support by the economic department	1.78%	1.12%	3.65%	1.90%
More freedom in decision making	2.67%	4.09%	4.65%	3.32%
Other	1.78%	1.47%	0.66%	3.32%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: own research

4. CONCLUSION

Interest in own competitiveness in purchase makes companies increase their endeavour to realize changes in relations with suppliers as well as in internal processes. Under our conditions, this aspect of enterprise market orientation is connected with intensifying and strengthening of business

relations with domestic suppliers and suppliers from partner countries of the European Union and other countries.

The results of research have characterized the present state of market orientation in the purchase sphere in individual types of enterprises and have made it possible to take a benchmarking approach and thus confront the practices used in industrial enterprises which were included in the samples with those ones which were not part of research.

The research made on the basis of 581 questionnaires on market orientation in the purchase sphere has resulted in the following conclusions:

- the logic of market orientation in many enterprises is not a priority direction, but rather the one of possible variants among other variants, which are not necessarily in contradiction with the mentioned concept, but its appropriation expects a hierarchy of attitudes in an enterprise;
- the size of enterprise is one of the main factors of applying the new approaches. The bigger the enterprise, the clearer the differences in comparison to smaller enterprises in the application of factors of market orientation are. At the same time, there is no unchangeable opinion that small and middle size enterprises eliminate some delay in the purchase sphere by applying the methods corresponding with this type of enterprises. Many small and medium size enterprises do all what large companies do in the purchase sphere;
- organizational aspects play an important role in market orientation, especially as far as the structure of decision making about purchase, and thus also the enterprise culture in this sphere, are concerned;
- in the enterprises on the territory of the Slovak Republic, purchase function is gradually becoming strategic. Its position in the organizational structure of enterprise is an expression of importance, which the management ascribes to the purchasing department as an organizational unit, and influences its perception by the whole enterprise. The strategic aspect of purchase function and its relations with other departments of enterprise require the purchasing department to be directly managed by the enterprise management. Thus it is possible to avoid perceiving only the technical aspects of the purchase function (in case it depends on production or development departments) or exclusively financial ones (if it depends on the financial manager).

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