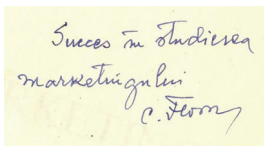




## PROFESSOR C. FLORESCU – FOUNDER OF THE MARKETING SCHOOL FROM BUCHAREST



*Since its launching in the universe of the academic knowledge, in 1971, marketing has been a part of the scientific portfolio of the Faculty of Commerce within the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies until 2003, when the Marketing Faculty got separated. In this period the person who activated as a mentor of a group of young teachers from the Marketing Department was PhD prof. Constantin Florescu, Head of the Department between 1971 – 1983 and 1990 – 1995. Prior to that, between 1966 -1968, he had exercised the function of Dean of the Faculty of Commerce. On his way of professional and personal ascension, he managed in such beautiful manner to melt together a Moscow experience, the position of magazine editor as well as an interest and a wide open spirit towards the market economy, which he expressed from his youth. The professor was educated in the field of the domestic commerce which he never*

*abandoned; therefore in 1979 he coordinated the volume Economia comerțului interior, published by Editura Didactică și Pedagogică. (Nicolae Lupu)*

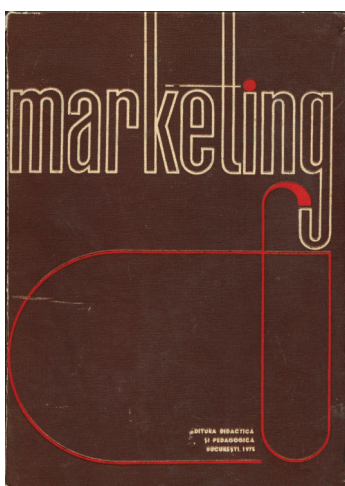
**JEL Classification:** M31

Born in the regions of Dolj County in 1928, professor C. Florescu got his B. Sc. Degree Diploma and PhD. Diploma in the field of Economy, starting his career as a specialty editor in the field of commerce, and continued as a senior lecturer at the Commerce Department of the current Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies. He was the Dean of the Faculty of Commerce within the respective institution and in October 1971 he became the Head of the first Marketing Department from the Romanian higher education system.

By the entire scientific and pedagogical work that he transmitted to his disciples, he acquired unanimous recognition as a creator of the Marketing School from Bucharest. On the maturity of his intellectual creative force, he passes away in the summer of 2004 after a short, but hard suffering.

The main stages of the evolution of the marketing higher education system in more than three and a half decades are directly connected to the personality of professor C. Florescu. During the summer of 1968 he participates to the East - West Marketing Seminar organized at Palma de Mallorca under the auspices of the International Marketing Federation where he has the possibility – according to his own confession - to become acquainted to the new spirit infused by the marketing optics to the new microeconomic thinking. Then, in the autumn of 1970 he opens at the Faculty of Commerce within the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies the first lecture of “Domestic Market Study” and in the following

academic year he becomes the Head of the first academic Marketing Department in Romania and professor of the homonym discipline. In 2001, talking about the beginnings of the academic marketing in Bucharest, professor Florescu was stating: The introduction of Marketing as discipline as well as the foundation of a distinct Department has been possible, among other things, due to some changes which interfered in the ASE Management Board, the new Rector Professor Gheorghe Dolgu, who proved out to have a generous outlook, extremely receptive to what was new.” (Popa, Lupu, 2010, p. 205). The relative recovery of the state controlled economy in the 70s of the last century has allowed the newly created academic field to try to enter "... on the ground which remains «free» after the restraint of the economic indicators of the sole economic plan” as professor Florescu liked to say, when referring to the beginning of the Romanian marketing. For instance, the applicative field offered by the study of the dimensions of the consumer’s behavior (reasons, preferences, buying habits, attitudes, habits of consumption/usage etc.) was offering a ground for the development of marketing researches and the interpretative value of the results, based on processing the information, using some methods of statistics and mathematics, high toned at that time.



*The volume Marketing from 1975 is the first edition of the manual released at an acknowledged publishing house; with absolute discretion, the collective of authors is registered on page 2: C. Florescu (editorial board), D. Patriche, R. Emilian, V. Danciu, N. Pop, V. Adăscăliței, Gh. Dumitru, M. Ispășescu.*

We also find professor Florescu as an active participant to the First International Marketing Congress (July 1971, Timișoara) and afterwards to all the other prestigious scientific events, organized in the academic circle, developed in our country under the aegis of the Romanian Marketing Association – AROMAR (Asociația Română de Marketing) – the first organization in this field, established on 25 March 1971, founded by Professor Florescu himself) - as well as in a larger context, at the confluence with the economical practice.

Preoccupied by developing the means of scientific knowledge he knows how to involve his collaborators and disciples from the new Marketing Department in writing the first academic course in the field (1971-72) and then in publishing the first marketing manual

(Florescu, et al., 1975) at the Didactical and Pedagogical Publishing House from Bucharest. Due to the fact that the means of knowledge request operating instruments as well, he initiated and coordinated an editorial work office designed to draw up the workbooks, practice works and case studies for the department’s disciplines in order to confer a more pronounced applicative character to the teaching system in the field.

In order to stimulate the exchange of ideas and not only of “words” (as he often used to underline), professor Florescu is the initiator and the leader of the Marketing Laboratory within the Department he manages – a place of fruitful debates between the specialists from the teaching system, research and economical apparatus. Many of the initiatives that will mark out the specialty teaching system during the following years originate in these debates. Thus, a platform of opinions for the inter-university exchange

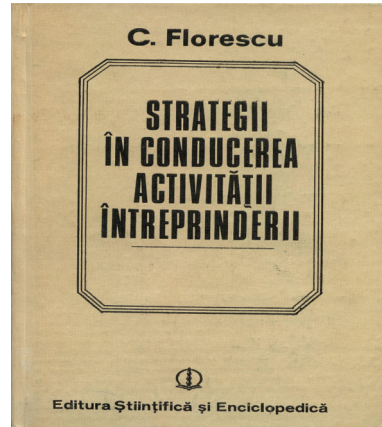
was created with a range of departments and academic groups coming from the main universities of the country.

He created and developed a strong doctoral school of marketing, and all of his over 30 PhD scholars who finished the doctoral studies under his guidance bear the hall mark of his great professional personality. He adopted an approach imprinted by an outright honesty, always suggesting, with tact and discretion, his own point of view, without imposing anything in the “manum military” way. He inspired his PhD scholars with the belief that he felt solidarity with them in the sense of responsibility for all minuses and performances that they reveal in the PhD Thesis.

Professor Florescu validated his position as a School Leader also through the interest he had in the field of marketing metatheory. His communication entitled “Metamarketing; epistemological reflections” presented at the symposium “Ten years of Marketing Higher Education in Romania”, subsequently included in a reference work of the specialty literature (Florescu, 1987) which turned into a

gnoseological success in the field of fundamental marketing research. In 1981 comes to light a new reference work in the Romanian academic space (Florescu, et al., 1981) where he motivates his collaborators to promote – in a true team work spirit – their experiences acquired on the occasion of different forms of post - graduate trainings developed in an international environment. Among

the personal books for which the professor worked the most, it is worth mentioning the work which appeared to the Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House from Bucharest and which is entitled *Strategii în conducerea activității întreprinderii (Strategies for the Management of the Enterprise’s Activity)* (Florescu, 1987). The content is better reflected in the subtitle: “Reevaluation in Marketing’s Theory and Practice”, this work presenting in a diachronic approach, the main stages of evolution of this domain at a global level and militating with the arguments of the scientific perspective for a change of mentality regarding the relationships between the producers and consumers, in the genuine spirit of the marketing optics.

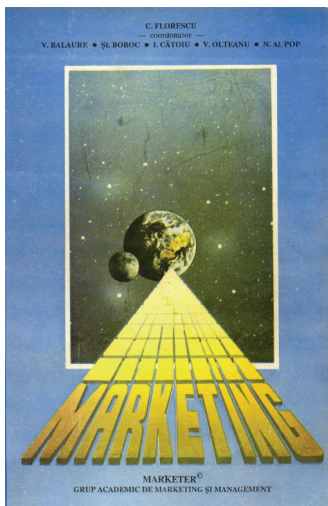


*The authentic title of the book Strategii în conducerea activității întreprinderii, a publication of reference, within the Scientific and Encyclopedic Publishing House, from 1987 - „Reevaluation of the theory and practice of Marketing” – has been accepted only as a subtitle, inside of the book.*



*With an excellent rhetoric, vivacious, as usually, beside colleagues and graduates, the former dean, professor C. Florescu, within the 20 year reunion of the 1968 promotion.*

After the events occurred in December '89, professor Florescu initiated a powerful revitalization trend in the Romanian economical higher education system, from a curricular perspective by introducing numerous new courses and applied activities, as well as from the perspective of their connection to practice, to the concrete realities that Romania was experiencing in the transition process to the market economy. He is the initiator and head of a marketing research center called "MARKETER". Together with the team that he was leading, the Professor taught awareness building or knowledge improving courses regarding



*In 1992, the editor of the volume Marketing has been Marketer – Academic group of marketing and management; the collective of authors, with C. Florescu (coord.), V. Balaure, Șt. Boboc, I. Cătoiu, V. Olteanu, N. Al. Pop, will be distinguished with the „Virgil Madgearu” award of the Romanian Academy.*

marketing optics in enterprises and institutions from numerous towns in the country, aiming firstly to change the mentality among his interlocutors concerning the approach of market phenomena and processes. From this position he coordinated many concrete projects for training specialty staff, for launching on the market new products and services, for restructuring the distribution network, for preparing sale forces or for editing specialty books. In this context the center issues the first post - December marketing work (Florescu, et al., 1992) which becomes for Romania, which was crossing a period of transition to market economy, a reference mark in the specialty literature. The first print run, impressive for that time – 25 thousand copies – represented an act of courage for the editors, but the book pervaded in the greatest national university libraries and sold out on the market in less than three years.

The Academy – the most prestigious scientific forum of the country – offered to Professor Florescu in 1974 the award: “P.S. Aurelian” for his work *Conducerea științifică în comerț (The scientific management in commerce)* (Florescu, 1970). After more than over two decades, in 1994, the same academic institution was crowning the efforts of the group of authors coordinated by the Professor with the award “Virgil Madgearu” for the work *Marketing*. Thus, he becomes one of the few laureates who witness the crowning of his scientific efforts with both awards granted by the Romanian Academy in the field of economic sciences.

Professor Florescu was animated by an inquisitive spirit and he was a tireless searcher on the tortuous way which leads to the truth, a real toiler in the field of knowledge. He always knew how to imprint the teamwork spirit to his collaborators, constantly animated by the force of the personal example. His commitment and devotion to the responsible work, oriented towards a well determined scope, never left him. His analytical spirit in approaching the problems waiting to be solved did not prevent him from imposing a systematical way of thinking, where the reasoning components inter correlate in order to compose the whole, and his actions to be always oriented towards the goal to be achieved. As for the manner of approaching the market phenomena and processes, he promoted the autonomous study at their macroeconomic level, without reducing their explanation to the individual behavior of the demand agents. He is therefore entitled to be considered a precursor of the holistic thinking in marketing, promoted at the beginning of the third

millennium by the reputed American Professor Philip Kotler (Kotler, Jian and Maesince, 2002, p. 42 and next).

Having always in mind the theory of the things well done (he used to quote Tadeusz-Kotarbinski with his „Treaty of things well done”), the Professor was always preoccupied by the power of his personal example, during the process of scientific awareness, in order to be able to bring to his collaborators a correct way of judgment and action. The fact that he tried to make the difference between the urgent problems and the important ones, and the fact that he tried to give his attention to the last ones, allowed him to develop a strategic vision about the economic processes and phenomena. He assiduously advised his followers and his collaborators to follow such a way of thinking, so that they can separate, when the case, the eternal things from the passing ones. In order to sustain the idea that at the beginning of every intervention on scientific research, there is a need for some conception explanation, he has always quoted Rene Descartes with his famous quote: „... understand the meaning behind words and you will salvage the world from half of its wonderings”. He used to confess that, when he was following an idea in order to outline it in a scientific intervention he was always writing with difficulty. He was considering that he achieved a performance when he was filling with his writing - in a final form - an entire page of a book. A follower of the principle “non multa, sed multum”, he did not invade the specialty literature with articles and studies, but those that were published acquired unanimous recognition from the informed reader, as being true essays in the marketing domain.

Professor Florescu had a meritorious contribution to the development of the university teaching, mainly by testing and implementing some docimological methods aiming at stimulating the complex evaluation and auto evaluation of the students’ professional performance. The guiding, evaluating and grading system during the entire semester (academic year) that he initiated more than three decades ago and that he promoted constantly is to be found nowadays – summarized - in the evaluation methodology imposed by the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). What we believe to be a progress in the evaluation of the student’s professional performance is the fact that its beneficiaries – the students - understood its educative purpose as a continuous means of stimulation for rhythmic preparation and not as a purpose by itself (cumulating points for passing).

Professor Florescu left behind a consolidated academic school of marketing, able to enter at any time in the international competition of ideas in the area of managerial sciences. Without claiming to gather an inventory, we are simply trying to point out some uncontestable personal contributions brought to the development of the marketing theory and practice. We set them off in this order of ideas:

- development of the theory of demand for goods and of the mechanism of the quantification of its influencing factors, accompanied by its mathematical shaping with a predictive purpose, with clear operational valences in order to be able to forecast its future evolution on the market;
- complex approach of the elasticity phenomenon and of the demand plasticity for its complex promotion, regarding the marketing decisions, the signification of the quantification statistic instrument (elasticity coefficient); transposing the results in directions of action within the area of the programs and products research – development, services, distribution and consumption;

- developing the theoretical basis of the enterprise's market concepts, respectively of the product on the market; diversification of the qualitative and quantitative instruments of measuring and evaluating the market dimensions; improving the market structure research by typological segmentation and analysis, in parallel with the adjustment of the forecast models to the specificity of the phenomena of that market which is subject to research;
- formulating, in an original manner, the marketing functions, fact which confers to the Romanian school the pioneer status in the domain; these functions have been grouped in three stages: a premise function (market research, utilization and consumption needs), a middle function (increasing the enterprise's adaptability to the requests of its market environment) and two objective functions (superior fulfillment of the consumption or utilization needs and profit maximization);
- notional-conceptual and operational differentiation of the market studies from the marketing researches; the option for broadening the investigations, "upstream" as well as "downstream" of the market, represented a preliminary step in approaching systemically the investigations flow – starting from a new product, to tracking its post-consumption course – a premise for coming back to the creation of better goods and services ideas;
- conceptualizing the marketing strategy through a polyvalent approach, as a multifaceted entity, which meet a common purpose supporting hence its status of a nucleus of the marketing policies;
- developing the decisional mechanism within the marketing science, in terms of (certain, arbitrary, undetermined and competitive) environments used for formulating and taking decisions regarding the report to the market they target and serve.



*Professor C. Florescu, in 2001, at the celebration of „30 years of marketing in Romania”, in the middle of the colleagues from the marketing department; at his right, prof. V. Balaure, the department chair who succeeded him; after the passing away of professor C. Florescu, the laboratories of the marketing department, respectively, the Big Prize of the „Marketing” section of the National Olympics of Students in Economics have borrowed his name.*

Almost three decades have passed since I have known professor Florescu, whether it has been as a student, a PhD scholar or a colleague of his. With the minute attention of a craftsman and a true master's intuition, he has guided my steps all through my formative years as Professor in the Romanian higher education system. From the multitude of situations and experiences we lived together, I try to sort out a few, in order to best outline the Professor's personality.

When I was a student he advised me, discreetly, to take the first steps in the marketing research and then to approach courageously a series of ideas, new for that time, in the problematical field of my thesis which I completed under his coordination. Then, as his assistant, the Master supported me in publishing my investigations in the marketing field of reference, in a moment of confusion because of the debates concerning its compatibility to the planned economy.

He enjoyed being accompanied to his courses and he was asking me to do this even after many years of "assistance". His argument was convincing. The Master was saying: "... you are the only one in the lecture room who has attended this lecture in the previous years, and because you know its content you force me to bring new elements in the discussion thread".

His strong desire to stimulate the dialogue and engage his students in debates during the course, an attitude that could be called "rather revolutionary" for 60' - 70's, found pragmatic forms of accomplishment. He was always asking his auditory to formulate questions during the lecture, without being afraid that he would lose the course of ideas. He was always suggesting as a solution: "the principle of getting into inspiration". When he was talking, once in a while he needed to stop and take a deep breath. At this moment any student, who was following the subject, could come up with a question or make a brief commentary related to the discussed theme. To those who were shyer, he offered the possibility to formulate their questions in written, during the break, and put them down on his desk so that he could give them an answer before continuing his lecture.

I have had the privilege of working together with the Professor and draw up the first manual of marketing issued in Romania. The group of colleagues coordinated by the Master for reaching this goal still remember in a nostalgic way, the enthusiasm and devotion the Professor was inspiring to them when they had concerns about formulating a hypothesis or outlining new concepts, new for that time, still invalidated by the realities highlighted in practice. We used to lose the run of time, encouraged by the debates true academic environment and by the fact that everyone had the possibility everyone to support, by means of arguments, his own points of view.

In his last four years of life I had the chance, after long discussions and insistencies, to receive the Professor's acceptance for collaborating with a distinguished colleague of his – Professor Mălcomete, head of the Marketing School from Iași – and with me to a reference work for the Romanian specialty literature: *Marketing. Dicționar explicativ (Marketing. Explanatory Dictionary)* (Florescu, Mălcomete and Pop, 2003). With a vigor to be envied and an outstanding sense of duty, professor focused on every idea, on every enunciation within an ample editing work for validating the concepts exposed by the authors (a total of eighty six persons) in order to obtain the necessary unity and coherence required by such a work. He had the satisfaction that the work to which he dedicated a lot of efforts was successfully launched on the market. The sense of responsibility towards the work in which he was involved, never left him. On the bed of suffering, just before closing his eyes

forever, he told me „... what would have happened, now that I find myself in this situation, if we had not finished the work for the Dictionary”.



*Professor C. Florescu, in the company of his colleague prof. N. Al. Pop, in Aula Magna of ASE, presenting the result of a joint effort – the monumental publication Marketing. Dictionar explicativ, distinguished with the prize „Encyclopedia of 2003” by the General Association of Economists in Romania; the launching event has been organized within the international education book fair „Gaudeamus”.*

Professor Florescu has always been spurred on by a sentiment of love for school and its role in society. He did not hesitate a single moment to fight for its prestige and for giving it the place it deserves in the range of those institutions which form one’s character. Preoccupied by the educational – formative valances of the pedagogical act, he was seeking to reveal himself as an example to his students, by his behavior, scientific speech, attention to the details and the capacity for evaluating performances. He was not a superficial person and the fact that he was harsh on superficiality was misunderstood by those who were subject to his criticism. But his conduct of fighting imposture and the lack of sense of duty were rising from a strong auto demanding spirit, which seldom – at a superficial analysis – seemed exaggerate. Those who really understood his message surrounded him

with esteem and respect whether they were students, graduates or mature people, gray haired people who were frequently coming back to Alma Mater. As a person who was building characters, Professor Florescu has always encouraged his generations of disciples to “sharpen their pencils” and put down in writing their own ideas, after submitting the message they want to convey to a solid judgment. He never hesitated to support every initiative whether coming from a student, PhD scholar or a colleague and

which was meant to lead to his self assertion in the field of knowledge.

Beyond his contributions of substance to the development of the marketing science within the Romanian territory, professor Florescu bequeathed to his disciples a rigorous mode of approaching the research intervention in understanding the market phenomena and processes. He inspired the respect for the written words and the professors’ responsibility for their students.

Starting from a pioneer position of the Romanian marketing school, he outlined and consolidated its position – nowadays fully competitive - in the perimeter of international knowledge exchange. The message professor Florescu left over generations is an optimistic one of faith and confidence in the fully success of the expression mode of the Romanian intelligence creative force which is to be invested for serving the national progress and prosperity.

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*\* Personality of the Romanian Marketing Higher Education professor Nicolae Al. Pop, has been occupying since 2004 the position of Dean of the Faculty of Business Administration, teaching in foreign languages, within the Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies (ASE). Between 2005 and 2009 he was Director of the Romanian- German MBA Program of Entrepreneurial Management within ASE.*

*He followed postgraduate studies and post PhD specialty studies to the universities from Frankfurt am Main, Krems (Austria), Paris, Köln. He is a tenure professor of the courses of Strategic Marketing, International Marketing and Customer Service Management within ASE. Prof. N. Al. Pop, a multi-lingual speaker occupied, following a competitive examination, a professor position at the University of Applied Sciences from Bochum and he was a visiting professor to the universities from Darmstadt, Orléans, Akron (SUA) and Montreal. He gave several talks to the universities from Germany, Austria, Hungary and Morocco.*

*Professor N. Al. Pop is a PhD coordinator; expert of the Foundation for Business Administration Accreditation, member of the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, President of the Marketing – PhDs Commission within the National Council for Attesting Higher Education Titles, Diplomas and Certificates; foundation member of many associations in Romania as well as member of the Marketing Management Association (SUA). He is editor or member of the Editorial Board of many scientific magazines which are published in Bucharest, Iași, Oradea and SUA. The Association of Faculties from Romania awarded him in 2008 the distinction of Professor Emeritus as well as the first prize for marketing literature. In 2008 he is also awarded the Doctor Honoris Causa recognition of the university from his native lands, University of Oradea, whom professor N. Al. Pop never hesitates to support.*