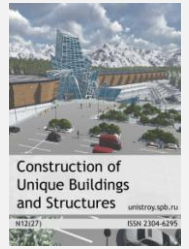




Construction of Unique Buildings and Structures



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Integrated marketing communications as a function of brand development

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ABSTRACT

Modern brand management represents the integrated management of all contacts of the brand with the consumer. Brand is also an instrument and a subject of market communications. In this respect, it is necessary to harmonize the different forms of communication with the company's defined brand strategy. Authors put forward the hypothesis that the appropriate choice of the communication resources and the message sent to consumer are in direct positive correlation with effects that can be produced to existing and potential customers in order to stimulate the purchase. The ultimate goal is to devise a communication method (message) which would be adequately understood and received in the appropriate environment and that would produce the desired effects for the advertisers.

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Introduction - brand's communication mix

Coordinated management of all the channels and mechanisms of market communications is condition sine qua non achieving the basic communication goal of every company and brand – projections of the identity in the image perceived by consumers [1-21].

The overall activity of the company (other than trade secrets) should be available to the public in order to build up a picture of him in the eyes of customers and the wider environment. As one of the four basic marketing instruments, promotion should inform about all others and lead to the product sales in the long term. Promotion means "the process of communication between the seller and potential buyer with the aim of influencing his attitudes and behavior" [1]. Promotional activity of the company is achieved through a process of communication that represents its essence. Successful communication is the key process of promotion and one of the oldest human activities. In the broadest sense, "Communication means understanding someone with some other" [2]. (In order to realize a communication, there must be something that represents a common interest for both sides) Communication represents the establishment of necessary contacts of interested parties through certain resources. "Marketing Communications" is the set of all communication aspects of the marketing mix instruments, which seeks to influence the consciousness (awareness) and behavior of current and potential customers, consumer and/or users and in the direction of their motivation to purchase and to enter into long-term relationships with a particular organization, based on mutual trust and loyalty [3]. The entire promotional activity is, in essence, based on the successful communication process. The main objectives of marketing communication include [4]:

Continuous information of potential and current customers about products, services and terms of sale;

"Convincing" people to choose a specific product, to buy in certain shops to visit specific events, etc.;

Encouraging customer's actions and guiding their behavior according to the offer of specific organizations.

Numerous examples from business practice have shown that it is wrong to create a brand only by advertising activities that in the past were often the case. As *Tim Robinson*, the director of the company *CoreBrand*, said: „Advertising is just the icing on the cake. It is a glow that helps to raise awareness of the brand, but I cannot build a brand“ [5]. When it comes to brand building, the dominant role is played by instruments of corporative communications.

Brand's communication mix includes [6]: (1) **Instruments of integrated marketing communications** (With the growth of brand's importance in modern business, the usage of many other concepts of marketing and public relation increases as well. Practice has shown that one of the main reasons for the increased importance of integrated marketing communications is the usage of this concept in brand's development and management) - *advertising through TV, radio, press, internet, outdoor advertisement mediums (billboards, hoardings, illuminated signs etc.) and indoor advertising (brochures, flyers, posters etc.), sales promotion, personal selling, communication activities of direct marketing, the communication aspect of the product – packaging, , the communication aspect of the price, the communication aspect of the distribution,* and (2) **Instruments of corporate communications** – *construction and improvement of corporate identity, image and reputation, organization of special events, participations at trade fairs, sponsorships, internal communication, communication during the crisis, etc.* The decision regarding the instruments that should be chosen in brand's communication mix, will depend on several criteria: coverage of the target audience, contribution in creating the desired reaction of the target audience, compliance with the brand image, complementarity of individual instruments, effectiveness levels for different groups, costs of using certain criteria.

In order to achieve the best possible effects of brand communication, it is necessary to create communication programs starting from the viewpoint of the customer, not the organization or competition. The whole process of development and brand communication with customers should be guided by their needs, preferences and characteristics. Some of the key changes, which has occurred by this interplay, imply a shift from [7]:

- **Functions to processes.** So far, only experts from existing functions dealt with the process of brand communication – experts for advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing. Therefore, there was not a single, integrated approach to creating and sending messages, but there were more separate communication programmes, and often they were not in accordance with each other.
- **Transactions to relationships.** In the past, it was a common practice for many organizations to measure their success through performed transactions (for example, sales volume). Nowadays, the understanding of success has experienced a great change thanks to the concept of relation marketing. First of all,

because of the fact that the business goal is building long-term relationships with customers. In fact, just adapting products to customers' needs and desires does not always provide sales increase. The essence of modern business is to initiate a repurchase, through the identification of important advantages for the customer and for the organization, in order to establish a long term cooperation (association) and development of common values and benefits.

- **Monologue to dialogue.** The essence of the brand communication is that it has to be a two-way communication. In other words it means that customers can request and obtain desired information, not only to receive a message that is being sent to them by brand. Brand "tells" its own story, it sends specific messages, but it must be based on the needs and desires of customers and must respond to them as well.
- **Tactics to strategies.** This shift implies that marketing and brand communication represent strategic tool for the organization and not as tactical changes that will be taken if something does not "go" according to plan. In fact, these activities were often seen "something that should be done" or "it would be useful in some cases". The communication programme should develop, plan and estimate in long term and measure effects.
- **Efficiency to effectivity.** In essence, the message should meet the effectivity criteria, respectively, to influence customers, their awareness, attitudes, behaviour and their buying decisions, because only in this way a maximum return on investment in communication could be expected (efficiency).
- **Results to final outcomes (Output to outcome).** So far, the effect of the campaign has been measured by its results (outputs) or through, for example, the number of broadcast messages in relation to costs, the scope of activities of sales promotion, etc. However, bearing in mind the previously explained, nowadays the final outcome should be measured, or whether the target audience received messages that were directed to them and whether they understood them, measure if messages were incentive and effective, did and how they influenced the consciousness, and customers' behaviour and attitudes etc. The Assessment at this level requires extensive research, focus groups, etc.

Previously explained changes in marketing and public relations are shown in the following figure (figure 1):

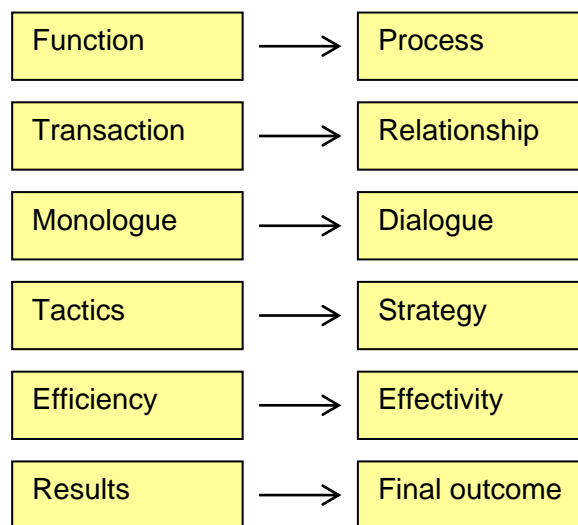


Figure 1. Key changes in marketing and public relations [8]

We can conclude that the aim of the communication activities in the process of creation and brand positioning is to notify customers and the public, to provoke attention and interest, to motivate the purchase, to achieve and maintain a position in the minds of buyers. The key prerequisite regarding the creation of a better image of the brand and company, in relation with the surrounding environment, is the management and the coordination of overall marketing processes and corporate communications. In addition, employees are one of the most important figures for the success of brand communication programs, in terms of whether they fulfill or not the promised essences of the brand. In order to make employees understand its essence, each brand communications program must be, at first, presented and explained to them.

The development of integrated marketing communications as a function of branding

Integration is very important when it comes to marketing communications. From the perspective of brand building, all communication options should be estimated according to their potential impact on brand value. Each communication options should be assessed according to its effectiveness and efficiency to influence on the brand awareness and with which it creates, maintains and strengthens the brand. Brand awareness is the consumers' ability to identify the brand in different circumstances, as indicated by their results in terms of recognizing the brand and its remembering. Brand image, as previously noted, represents customers' perceptions and beliefs, which reflect associations in consumers' memory. The choice of instruments of the integrated marketing (brand) communication depends on several criteria [9]:

- coverage of the target audience;
- contribution to the creation of the desired response (reaction) of the target audience;
- compatibility with the brand image, in terms of the level to which a particular instrument contributes to the initiation of unique associations of the brand, or to sending a unique message;
- the complementarity of individual instruments of communication;
- the effectiveness level for different groups of customers (those who already know about of the product / brand and those who do not);
- costs of using certain instruments of communication.

It is important to apply a mix of various communication options, where each of these options has a special role in building and maintaining the brand value. Company “*Michelin*” can invest in research and development, “get into” advertising, promotion and other communication to strengthen the association regarding the “security” of their tires, but they can also decide to sponsor events so they could be seen as modern and actual.

The programme of marketing communications should be designed in that way so its unity is larger than the sum of its parts. In other words, there should be harmony between certain options of communication so that the effects of each option individually would be highlighted by the presence of the other option.

Integrated business communication has an immeasurable impact on business in modern conditions. It is consisted of two components [10]: **external** and **internal**.

External communication includes every form of conscious market communication with external stakeholders of the company: customers, business partners, state, creditors, suppliers, etc. It represents every target communication, in the sense that there is a pre-defined receptor of broadcasted information. Most authors agree that a continued investment in marketing communication is the basis of creating a strong brand.

Internal communication represents the method the company organizes interaction among its employees. *Keller* claims that this is the moment when the process of branding actually begins. Fulfilling employees' satisfaction in one company and the harmonization of their individual convictions with a set of values that company wishes to reflect, represents a strong signal that the company unwittingly sends to the market. In this way, the sincerity of the company is reflected, and its employees take over the role of the performer of the direct market communication. It is considered that this is especially important for companies that operate globally. Internal communication is an important part of every organizational culture.

A various influence of all marketing communication on creating the perception and value of the brand, can be noticed through the basic steps in the process of marketing communications as well, through which consumers go through until they come to their conviction about the product [11]: (These steps were determined by William McGuide, influential psychologists from the Yale University)

1. **Presentation** – person must see or hear the communication;
2. **Observation** – person must pay attention to communication;
3. **Understanding** – person must to understand the intended message and the reasons for communication;
4. **Loosening** – person must respond positively to the intended message and the reasons of communication;
5. **Intention** – person must plan the desired behavior from the communication;

6. **Behavior** – person should behave in the desired way.

The consumer has to go through all six steps to get to their conviction about the product, and on each of them there are potential pitfalls for an advertising campaign and that is the reason why it is important to devise and implement a marketing communications program very carefully, in order to achieve the desired effects on consumers.

In modern business, which is characterized by bigger brand importance, the application/usage of many other concepts of marketing and public relations is also increased. Numerous examples have shown that one of the main reasons for the increased importance of integrated marketing communication is the usage of this concept in the process of brand development and brand management. In order to build a brand-customer relationship, it is necessary to find adequate methods of establishing contact with potential customers and maintaining contact with current customers (constantly sending information) by the company and brand. The essence is to figure out how to use the instruments of marketing communication in the best way in establishing and maintaining contact and sending messages about brand in an effective and efficient manner.

Many experts point out that human resources and corporate culture represent one of the critical success factors of the global brand strategy. Experience of business practice has shown that, if brand communication activities are not consistent with previously established relational norms, the consumer will negatively evaluate both these activities and the brand as a whole. Therefore, an integrated brand communication is necessary in order to achieve consistency of brand communication. In this way can be improved the customers' loyalty as the best form of defense against competition.

Conclusion

Successful brand is built by different communication methods. Successful brand should be built through various forms of communication. Brand is, at the same time, both instrument and the subject of the market communication. The communication process is essential in establishing a link between the brand and the customer and their relationship. Once the brand identity is adopted, it is necessary to analyze the communication method with customers, through which the brand will be presented. The way in which a brand communicates with the target group conditions the brand image. From the moment when customers become aware of the brand, the communication between the customer and the brand starts. Brand communication is conducted through marketing and corporate communications activities.

The process of integrated marketing communication involves the coordination of communication instruments, defining goals, determining financial resources that are necessary in order to accomplish defined goals, devising programs for their realization, evaluating results and undertaking corrective actions if the results are not in accordance with them [12]. Differentiated marketing communications have different roles in marketing program, but the basic purpose of all is to contribute to the brand value. In this sense, it is necessary to talk about different communication options, about their potential strengths and differentiated goals that can be achieved.

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Интегрированные маркетинговые коммуникации как функция развития бренда

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бренд,
продвижение,
связи,
сообщение

АННОТАЦИЯ

Современное управление брендом представляет собой интегрированное управление всех контактов бренда с потребителем. Бренд также инструмент и субъект рыночных коммуникаций. В связи с этим, необходимо гармонизировать различные формы коммуникации с определенной стратегией бренда компании. Авторы выдвинули гипотезу о том, что соответствующий выбор средств связи и сообщений, направляемых потребителю находятся в прямой положительной корреляции с эффектами, которые могут быть получены с существующими и потенциальными клиентами для того, чтобы стимулировать покупку. Конечная цель заключается в разработке способа связи (сообщения), которая бы способствовала получению желаемого эффекта для рекламодателей.

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