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SOCIAL MEDIA AS A NEW CHANNEL FOR COMPANY COMMUNICATION ON THE EXAMPLE OF CLOTHING COMPANY

The evolution of marketing orientations, issues of company and market communication are submitted in the article. The role of social media and its using by companies and their customers are pointed. The author of this article has presented the results of the research conducted with young citizens of Silesia Voivodeship.

Keywords: social media, mix promotion, marketing, purchaser, communication.

Formulation of the problem generally. Promotion is the main form of customer purchasing by company. It is often defined as a way of company and market communication. The proper promotional action, coordination of its potential and the using of modern ways to reach purchasers leads to market success. Promotional instruments are advertisement, personal sales, selling promotion, public relations and direct marketing [4].

It should be mentioned that the way of thinking about customer has changed as a result of new technologies development. Today the leading instruments of company and market communication are Internet and social media. Social media includes interactive, internet and mobile media. It has been assumed that the purchasers often rummage through Internet for information about brand, products and services.

Modern purchasers are not only educated but they know their needs and can enforce them, but they also struggle with huge amount of information which they get every day. The Internet appears to be the place where people can not only obtain the information about an interesting topic but they can discuss it with other users who are interested in the same matters. It is impossible in the "real world". From the other hand, an efficient dialogue with using of social media (Facebook, for instance) between company and its customers lets building long-lasting relations and to achieve market success.

Analysis of recent researches and publications. The problems of marketing in sport in the context of sport organizations management was shown in the works of such scientists, as Kotler Ph. and Armstrong G. [1; 5], Kaczmareczyk S. and Pałgan R. [3], Hulten B., Broweus N. and von Diju M. [2], Niestrój R. [6] and Zboralski M. [10].

The marketing is the base of modern trade. All advertisement and selling are based on it and every businessman is conscious of its meaning for company development. It is the tool which lets reaching the customers and making profits from business. While business was developing over the years, the marketing conception was transforming and acquiring new significance. In marketing theory, different company orientations can be distinguished. They are the basis for marketing actions. There are production orientation, product orientation, selling orientation, market orientation and finally social orientation. Consequently until now the notion of marketing is determined in at least two senses: traditional and modern. The

traditional sense of marketing was formed in the phase of production orientation and determines marketing as the notion, closely connected with business activity focused on profit. From this point of view marketing is the activity which supports selling of products and services, done with using more or less sophisticated methods and techniques of affecting the purchaser (advertisement, selling promotion, distribution, etc.). We can say as well that marketing is proper planning, coordination and controlling of all company action oriented to both present and potential markets [6].

From present point of view, we should concentrate on wider sense of marketing, and state that the main rule of marketing activity is satisfying the partner of exchange. This statement is given by Ph. Kotler, one of the most outstanding theorists of modern marketing, who defines marketing as the social and managing process, thanks to which individuals and groups gain what they need and want to gain, by creating, offering and mutual exchanging of valuable products [3].

According to this definition marketing is two-dimensional process. It is important here to build profitable relations with customer which is the exchanging of values. The relations based on values have to be profitable both for customer and company. Marketing is not a struggle with products, but with opinions and imaginations about these products [10]. That is why it can be supposed, that companies create values for the customers and build with them strong relations in order to gain from them particular values in exchange [5]. This can be done by using such social media as Internet forums and blogs.

Unsolved issues as part of the problem. The most important tendencies and powers accompanying present market changes are unsure economic environment, digital information age, developing globalization, more ethical and socially responsible standards and an increase in significance of not-for-profit marketing. Digital technology is a very important factor of changes. It constantly influences different social dimensions, including work, trade, communication, knowledge and organization. It forms social development in different fields, creating new possibilities of changes for marketing. So called technological "boom" introduced mankind into the age of digital information. Nowadays the dynamic development of computer, information and other technologies has considerable influence on the ways of providing company customers with some values.

At present, the contact with other people and with information sources all over the world is considerably bigger than in the past. Systematically all over the world information is transmitted by means of live satellite transitions and continually updated websites. The time of waiting for a letter or the news is finished irretrievably, because people have learned to use benefits of modern technology [2]. The most powerful among digital technologies is Internet. The number of Internet users all over the world is over 1.4 billion and increases systematically. Today people devote more and more time for surfing in the Internet than to watching television. They are on-line for 32.7 hours a week [1].

According to Polish Central Statistical Office, "a proportion of households owning a computer increases continuously. In 2012, 73% of households with at least one person at the age of 16-74 were equipped in a computer. In 2008-2012 the proportion of households with the access to the Internet increased as well. In 2012 this proportion was 71% while 67% households used the wide wave Internet connection. Both in the case of owning a computer and an access to the Internet the level of proportion is diverse and depended on the type of household, place of living and the level of urbanization. The using a computer and access to

the Internet have been declared more often by the households with children, the households in big cities and from the highly urbanized areas” [8]. A new generation of the Internet connects people with each other, introducing in lightening speed developing tools like blogs, social portals or video-sharing websites.

The interactive, favorable to society building, character of new Internet technologies make them a perfect tool for relations with customers. Moreover, the company website contains the information about goods and services, history and philosophy of the company, job offers and all content which can arouse the user's interest. In order to improve the information concerning the brand, blogging, participation in social services and buzz marketing are used [4]. All these determine **the aim of the article**.

Main material. Social media enable customers to place and share texts, pictures, sound materials and videos among other people. They enable companies to speak, to mark their presence in the Internet and support other communication actions.

The main forms of social media are submitted in Table 1. It is necessary to add that dialogs between company and its customers should be professional, taking under consideration the ethical significance of this cooperation. The mutual communication is important by providing customers with the topic of conversation, information, fueling discussion and not replacing them in these actions.

Table 1 – Forms of social media [4; 7]

Platform	Example	Description
Internet societies and forums	<i>forum.wp.pl, forum.gazeta.pl</i>	They assume different forms and sizes, established by consumers, unconnected with a company or sponsored by companies. They spread the information about products and firms and collect information and observations of customers
Blogs	<i>makeLifeEasier.pl, fashionelka.pl, kominek.in</i>	Regularly actualized Internet diaries with the personal or public nature, connecting people of common interests. They are full of advertising possibilities: the sponsorship of blog services, campaigns in blogs, product placement and trading blogs
Social portals	<i>Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Nk.pl, Pinterest</i>	Internet services which exist on the base of society collected around them, they make contacts with other users. Companies can promote themselves or be active users of a particular Internet service

The research by means of survey was conducted from April to June 2013. The research was carried on 244 young citizens of Silesia Voivodeship and concerned the using of new communication channels.

The subject of research was the clothing brand “Reserved”. The owner of this brand is LPP S.A. Company. Brand “Reserved” uses both traditional and modern promotion tools in its marketing strategy. Until recently this company has brand website, on-line shop and thematic blog *www.thisblogisreserved.com*.

Company cooperates with Polish fashion blog *zone*. Fashion blog *zone* is the area where the authors of blogs (the Internet diaries) write about fashion, present fashion stylization and pretend to be trendsetters. The promotion of company on social services enjoys popularity. Brand “Reserved” and LPP S.A. Company have used the possibilities given by social media

marketing since 2009. To promote the brand the following social web portals are used: *Facebook, Twitter, Youtube* and other blogs.

Thanks to these media, the purchaser involvement in promoting brand or product on social portals is used. The materials for marketing campaigns are created mostly in order to encourage sharing them with friends.

It results in increasing the reliability transmitted information because it comes from trusted source. The clothing brand “Reserved” possesses its own account on *Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest* and *Instagram*.

The subject of conducted research was the influence of new promotion channels on the customer behaviour of brand “Reserved”. The main goal of the research was the verification of respondent's group opinion about communication channels and modern communication channels used by analyzed company. There are two methods used to carry out the research: survey method and observation method. The research enabled to come to the following conclusions:

- examining the respondent answers and the number of comments and shares on the *Facebook* profile of brand “Reserved”, we can state that thanks to using this strategy of marketing communication, the company is able to influence the customers decisions concerning shopping. Moreover the customers have knowledge about promotions mainly from the Internet;

- the main channel of the brand and purchaser communication is social service *Facebook*. Thanks to it, brand “Reserved” gains new fans every day. They are potential customers of Reserved shops (the number of fans on *Facebook* on 9 August 2013 was 1 052 414 people). The action taken on this portal enables the company to maintain the communication with its customers on very high level;

- the research lets to estimate new forms of communication used by brand “Reserved” and to notice how the company reaches its consumers. From the analysis of research, it appears that the means of communication used by the brand are familiar to its customers and very attractive to them. The receivers of promotional announcement react to it rather in positive way. They often use discounts and special offers prepared only for them. Discount codes from *Facebook* and fashion magazines (*Avanti*, for instance) are very popular;

- the main conclusion after analyzing the research is the fact that modern communication activities are very effective for brand “Reserved”. LPP S.A. company which is the owner of this brand as one of the few Polish companies can enjoy such high position on the market, which is taken mainly due to support and devotion of faithful customers whose favor was won by means of proper communication with them.

The company asset is the fact that it concentrates on the contact with the customers in the social media. As it was mentioned earlier, the Facebook profile of this company has got a lot of fans.

Due to this fact, the company can afford to have personalized contacts with each of receivers, clear promotion transmission and to maintain positive relation with the consumer. It is should be stressed that all reserved marketing actions are directed not only to reaching the customers but to maintaining and building positive, long-lasting relation with them.

By means of social services, the promotional materials become more faithful and honest because the information about the products got from friends or person potentially unconnected with company arouse trust and build respect for the brand.

The results above are only the introduction to the further analysis of new channels of company communication with market and their influence on the behaviour of consumers. The further stage of research should be carried out in the following fields of marketing actions in a company [11]:

- building of company loyalty;
- the analysis of market by observing its actions in social media (review, opinions and reactions of users);
- users engagement to determine marketing goals and to provide continuous actions;
- integration of marketing actions by supplementing traditional marketing with presence in social media;
- building reputation of organisation and brand, including monitoring of comments in social media and influencing on them.

The analysis can help to create effective strategy of company communication on market and to determine business goals, to define target group and to find the most effective way of using social media in realisation of assumptions.

Conclusions and directions for further researches. In the face of all available means of communication with both an individual and mass customer, it is more visible that new technologies and affecting the market have appeared in companies for good. Customers often surf in the Internet before taking the decision to buy a new product. They look for others' opinion or recommendations.

Companies in reaction to this tendency widen the communication channels for their potential customers.

The goal of marketing is gaining the highest effect of particular campaign and the quality of communication with the market. The forms of communication have to change, evolve and improve with the changing of marketing environment. Such position will lead the company to the success on the market.

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Розділ 2 Інновації у маркетингу

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Соціальні медіа як новий канал комунікацій підприємства на прикладі компанії-виробника одягу

У статті досліджено еволюцію маркетингових орієнтацій та проаналізовано соціальні медіа компаній та комунікацій на ринку. Показано роль соціальних медіа та розкрито використання цих медіа компаніями та їх клієнтами. Надано результати дослідження, проведеного серед молоді Сілезії, щодо використання соціальних медіа компаніями на ринку.

Ключові слова: соціальні медіа, просування мікс, маркетинг, покупець, комунікації.

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Социальные медиа как новый канал коммуникаций предприятия на примере компании-производителя одежды

В статье исследована эволюция маркетинговых ориентаций и проанализированы социальные медиа компаний и коммуникаций на рынке. Показана роль социальных медиа и раскрыто использование этих медиа компаниями и их клиентами. Приведены результаты исследования, проведенного среди молодежи Силезии, касательно использования социальных медиа компаниями на рынке.

Ключевые слова: социальные медиа, продвижение микс, маркетинг, покупатель, коммуникации.

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