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Communication Strategies and Tactics as Key Points of Business Development

Strategie i taktyki komunikacyjne jako kluczowe punkty rozwoju biznesu

Abstract: *The study of communication strategies and tactics occupies an important niche in strategic management. The relevance of this article lies in the fact that the interest of modern business administration science in the search for patterns and mechanisms of communication influence on the recipient is growing constantly. Communication strategies and tactics in the advertising of English-language web-recourses have been determined. We have defined two communication strategies for online-stores slogans: 1) a strategy of encouraging the consumer to choose the appropriate goods or service; 2) a strategy of positioning the organisation in the market. Also various communication tactics, with the help of which those two strategies can be realised, have been described. They are: tactics of appeal to the consumer; tactics of target group indication; tactics of ambiguity/disambiguity of the expression, content and references; tactics of demonstration of the organisation's advantages and disadvantages; tactics of emphasizing competence, experience, traditions and values; tactics of goods and services naming; tactics of using the store's name. In this article we try to identify which of them is the most effective. The proposed versions are based on the results of linguistic interviewing.*

Keywords: communication strategy, communication tactics, strategic marketing, advertising slogans, online-stores

Streszczenie: *Badanie komunikacyjnych strategii i taktyki zajmuje ważne miejsce w strategicznym zarządzaniu. Znaczenie tego artykułu polega na tym, że zainteresowanie współczesnej nauki biznesową administracją pod kątem wyszukiwania wzorców i mechanizmów wpływu komunikacji na odbiorców stale rośnie. W artykule zostały zidentyfikowane strategie i taktyki komunikacyjne stosowane w reklamie anglojęzycznych zasobów internetowych. Zidentyfikowano dwie strategie komunikacji dla haseł sklepów internetowych: 1) strategię pobudzania konsumenta do wyboru towaru lub usługi; 2) strategię pozycjonowania organizacji na rynku. Opisano także różne taktyki komunikacyjne, za pomocą których te dwie strategie mogą być realizowane. Są to: taktyka postępowania z konsumentem; taktyka oznaczenia grupy docelowej; taktyka niejednoznaczności/jednoznaczności wyrażenia, treści i referencji; taktyka przedstawiania zalet i wad organizacji; taktyka podkreślenia kompetencji, doświadczenia, tradycji i wartości; taktyka nazewnictwa towarów i usług; taktyka użycia nazwy sklepu. W artykule podjęto próbę określenia, która z taktyk jest najbardziej efektywna. Zaproponowane wersje są oparte na wynikach wywiadów językowych.*

Słowa kluczowe: strategia komunikacji, taktyka komunikacyjna, marketing strategiczny, hasła reklamowe, sklepy internetowe

Introduction

Communication, in its various forms, has always been an integral part of the relations between different groups of people, from the Stone Age family to the modern nation state. Trade communication is a necessary condition for the

growth of small groups into complex societies with their systems of law, government, finance, education, administration and so on. At the heart of the trade communication is the act of exchange between producer and consumer for their mutual benefit.

Advertising communication in modern business has been analyzed in this article as a socio-cultural phenomenon. It is designed to influence the behaviour and beliefs of the consumers. Language manipulation occupies a special place and predetermines the use of language means of different levels to produce a hidden impact on the clients. Any company, product, service or anything else will make little progress if it cannot show what it is about and why it is different. Showing this means having a purpose behind the way names are created and used, the creation of logos and symbols, the uses of colours and typography, illustration and photography, pattern, style and the use of language.

Problem definition and its connection to important scientific and practical tasks

There are two very important notions in strategic marketing: visual identity and verbal identity of a brand. Visual identity is a recent term that was probably coined to avoid lengthy arguments about the meaning of “brand” versus “corporate identity”. Visual identity is a component in branding – the part you see, obviously.

As such it is an important part because what you see is more likely to influence you than what you are told. Verbal identity is another recent term that was coined to make it clear that identity is also expressed through words and language, whether we mean it to be or not. Some organisations have changed their language to be more customer friendly. Some organisations still cling to powerfully bad verbal identities, so bad on occasion that you can only navigate them with a professional guide. Verbal identity’s “basic elements” aim to make a brand’s language distinctive might comprise the following:

- the name,
- naming system for products, sub-brands and groups,
- a strapline,
- tone of voice principles,
- the use of stories¹.

A strapline is one of the key points and it is a subject of this article. The advertising slogan is a brief, meaningful message that reports information about a product or service and that is easy to remember. The slogan is an integral part of the advertising discourse, which is used, usually at the beginning or at the end of the ad text, along with the company name. As an advertising slogan, a strapline presents a unique component of communicative and pragmatic use of language for its design. In the conditions of overproduction of goods and services advertising also performs the function of consumer’s demand regulating, creating the illusion that new and better quality products or services are promoted. The slogan performs a central role in the advertising message, it should encourage

¹ J. Simmons, *The Invisible Grail: In Search of the True Language of Brands*, Texere, 2003, p. 115.

consumers to opt for the advertised services and position in the market. To be effective in the communication process, the slogans as accurately combined with linguistic form, pragmatic guidance and communication functions. All these mean using speech appears in the communication strategy and tactics. Strategic marketing communication helps to develop brand awareness, which means that consumers translate product information into perceptions about the product's attributes and its position within the larger market. Businesses also use marketing communication to retain the product's current customer base, and to cement relationships with customers and suppliers.

The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English gives the following definitions of "strategy": 1) a planned series of actions for achieving something; 2) the skill of planning the movements of armies in a war, or an example of this; 3) skillful planning in general (the Online Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, el. reg.).

That is that originally the term "strategy" appeared only in the military area. In 1972 L. Selinker at work *Interlanguage* used the term "communication strategies" to describe the processes used in communication to compensate for the deficits of linguistic resources².

Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller in their textbook *Marketing management* describe the terms *strategy* through other economical terms: *Goals indicate what a business unit wants to achieve; strategy is a game plan for getting there. Every business must design a strategy for achieving its goals, consisting of a marketing strategy and a compatible technology strategy and a sourcing strategy*³.

Communication strategy must have an idea at its heart. The only safeguard in ensuring that costumers will pay attention to the advertised product is to provide them with an idea they can't resist.

E. Klyuev said that the introduction of the concept of communication strategy makes it necessary to appeal to other concepts of linguistics and marketing including communication tactics. The term "communication tactics" is also borrowed from the military sphere. In Greek the word *tactics* means art alignment troops. In communicative linguistics it means specific speech actions aimed at achieving an impact at some stage of strategic cooperation. Thus, E. Klyuev defined communicative tactics as a set of practical moves in the actual process of verbal interaction, communication tactics are primarily correlated with a set of communicative intentions. The communicative intention is a tactical move that is a practical means of achieving an appropriate communication goal. The whole set of practical tools in the actual process of verbal interaction creates communicative tactics⁴.

Communication tactics should closely reflect an overall organisational plan. In this section the manager should look at his organisation's overall vision and core aims and objectives. He should then suggest how communications can help deliver these goals.

² L. Selinker, *Interlanguage*, "International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching" (IRAL), 1972, vol. 10, p. 186.

³ J.L. Keller, Ph. Kotler, *Marketing Management*, Upper Saddle River, NJ 2012, p. 50.

⁴ E.V. Klyuev, *Rechevaya kommunikatsiya*, Ripol Klassik, Moscow 2002, p. 51-76.

Communication is everything a brand does. As a communications theorist Paul Watzlawick said: "It is impossible not to communicate"⁵. The way the packs are designed, the words used, the way the phones are answered (or not), the products the name is put to, the shops in which these are sold: all these can say powerful things about a business.

As well as managing the brand's design and language, most strategic managers also invest money in communicating directly to the brand's various stakeholders through direct mail and PR, telemarketing and Internet-marketing, SEO, events and sponsorship programmes, and so on.

It is well-known that strategic communications have been characterized with two categories: "above the line" and "below the line". These names were originally connected with agency accounting procedures. The media paid commission for activities above the line but not for those below the line⁶.

The expressions above and below the line linger on, but there is now much talk about the importance of "integrated marketing", or "through the line", which is about how best to bring back together the fragmented pattern of activities in the better interests of the client. It is a holistic planning approach to engage a brand's audience to ensure greater effectiveness.

A statement of the main research and explanation of scientific results

The views of scientists on definitions of communication strategies and tactics have been analyzed in the thesis. Communication strategies and tactics in the advertising slogans of online-stores based on the English-language web-resources have been determined and analyzed according to the linguistics means. We have defined two communicative strategies for online-stores' slogans: 1) a strategy of encouraging the consumer to choose the appropriate goods or service; 2) a strategy of positioning the organization in the market. Also various communication tactics, with the help of which those two strategies can be realized, have been described. They are: 1) tactics of appeal to the consumer; 2) tactics of target group indication; 3) tactics of ambiguity/disambiguity of the expression, content and references; 4) tactics of demonstrations of the organization's advantages and exclusiveness; 5) tactics of emphasizing competence, experience, traditions and values; 6) tactics of goods or services naming; 7) tactics of using the store's name.

We take into account that there are explicit and implicit methods of intention representation. Explicit means a formally expressed aim and implicit means a formally unexpressed aim.

The use of nouns (toponyms, proper names and common nouns), adjectives, pronouns, adverbs, sensory vocabulary in the implementation of the communicative intention has been mentioned. It was determined that the tactic of goods or services naming and the tactic of target group mentioning are realized with common nouns; the tactic of ambiguity/disambiguity of the expression plan, content and references is realized with adverbs and definite and indefinite pro-

⁵ P. Watzlawick, J.B. Bavelas, D.D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, W. W. Norton, New York 1967, p. 127.

⁶ P. Feldwick, *What is Brand Equity, Anyway?*, WARC, Henley-on-Thames 2002, p. 58.

nouns, also personal pronouns are used to express the tactic of appealing to consumers; the tactic of an organization's advantages and exclusivity demonstration is often realized with superlatives – the superlative degree of adjectives comparison; the tactic of emphasizing a company's competencies, values, traditions and experience is realized with numerals.

As Feldwick stated that there are two types of measurable outcomes of brand communications: effects on sales or business and consumer responses, we think that these criteria can be applied to measure the outcomes of the advertising slogans. Both are important. It used to be thought that sales effects of advertising could never be satisfactorily separated from other factors affecting the business. However, the problem is not such a great one, as long as reliable data exists, especially with the use of modern modelling techniques. Consumer responses include reactions to the advertising itself – recall, liking – and attitudes to the brand. Of these, brand responses are ultimately the more important. Longer-term effects of brand communications on the strength of a brand may be seen through attitudinal questions and by the brand's marketplace performance, such as its ability to command a price premium or resist competitive pressures⁷.

In our study, we ought to determine the efficiency of various communication strategies and tactics in the slogan of online-stores. We created the online questionnaire containing two questions with choices: one question directed at studying the intentions of owners of online-stores (senders), the second – to study the customers' preferences of the same stores (recipients).

The first part of the questionnaire looks like this: Imagine that you are opening your private internet business. Which of the following advertising slogans would you choose for your Clothing & Apparel Online-store?

- For fashion lovers. Not followers
- We deliver worldwide
- The coolest stuff

The second part of the questionnaire is as follows: Which one of three online stores' websites would you visit first? Online-stores of bags:

- "DIAPER DUDE". Diapers Bags for Moms & Dads
- "Hartmann". The travel essence
- "Kipling". Make happy

In that questionnaire 180 slogans from real existing sites have been used. They represent all of the tactics we have singled out. Some slogans include two or more tactics. After receiving the results of the survey we determined the most frequently chosen slogans. That will enable us to identify the most effective tactics. Potential respondents are native English speakers.

The survey study conducted during 2016. Samples of 260 respondents were taken. 119 women and 141 men participated in the survey. The age of respondents varied from 20 to 66.

After assessing, organizing, tabulation and interpreting data, the following conclusions can be drawn. The question, directed at studying the intentions of owners of online-stores, got 127 responses.

⁷ Ibid., p. 59.

About 28% of the total respondents chose slogans which represent the tactic of goods or services naming. For example: *The Kids Department Store; Athletic Footwear; Art of hair; Smarter Home Improvement; The Original Car Cover Company; The travel essence; Luxury shoes & Accessories; The eco diamond*. Slogans, based on classification criteria, reflect the essence of the proposed goods, services and their features. In those cases promotional products are called directly with general categorial names. This means that the majority of the owners direct their business on the pragmatic consumers, who know what they want for sure and are searching for a certain product or service based on the special category.

A quarter of the total respondents chose slogans which represent the tactics of ambiguity/disambiguity of the expression, content and references. For example, the advertising slogan "for special needs" is of the ambiguous character that gives the feeling that in this online-store there are products for a client's special, particular needs; advertising slogan like *The home of all inclusive* is characterized by disambiguation and literally convinces consumers to purchase everything you need in one place. In these slogans owners expect to the client's uncertainty.

The slogans that represent the tactics of appeal to the consumer (15%) and the slogans that combine two or more tactics (14%) received almost the same number of reactions.

As 13.4% chose the slogans that represent the tactics of demonstrations of the organization's advantages and exclusiveness, we can say that such owners of online-stores would first emphasize the advantages of their business, such as low prices, high quality products, a wide range, free or round the clock delivery and others. For instance: *Read-iculously Low Prices; Expert Service. Unbeatable Price; Get free delivery on all our products; High performers at great value; Just Great Parts CHEAP*.

The following tactics received the lowest number of reactions: 2.3% – tactics of emphasizing of competence, experience, traditions and values; 2.3% – tactics of target group indication. Although, it's very important to be clear with whom online-store needs a dialogue and both qualitative and quantitative research is key to understanding the target audience. For example, existing or potential valuable customers must be identified and the richer and more vivid the description the easier it is to construct an effective communication strategy for them. Marketologists must remember that slogans should be relevant and appropriate to the audience. They might want to speak to supporters and donors in a much more forthright language than they would use for local authorities or other founders. But it is very important that there is continuity across the slogan. It is important that all of the stakeholders understand what kind of online-store it is, so the advertiser always needs to link back to the key organisational objectives and values.

None of the respondents, as potential owners of online-stores, chose the tactics of using the store name.

The question, directed at studying the customers' preferences of online-stores, got 133 responses.

About 30.8% chose the slogans that combine two or more tactics. For example: *Home Air Filters Delivered to Your Door; Bestselling books starring*

your child! Delivering the world's finest beef; The Clothes That Give You Life! You'll love your photo even more! World's largest running & walking store; The Best Kitchen Starts Here; Cool gadgets. Worldwide free shipping; Seriously into radio since 1974; The Diamond Store Since 1919; Bose performance for home, travel and anywhere in between.

29.3% of total respondents preferred the slogans which represent the tactic of goods or services naming. They read the slogan and understand that in this store they can buy what they are looking for and do not need to waste time on something else. Among such advertising statements are: *Clothing for Living the Full Life; Clothing of style & substance; Passion for books; Tomorrow's Mobile Innovations, Here Today; Resort-Casino-Reno; For the Love of Great Food; The Gemstone Destination.*

15% of total respondents opted for the slogans which represent the tactics of ambiguity/disambiguity of the expression, content and references. Among them are: *Inspiring cooks everywhere; The Essence Of Pleasure; Expect more. Pay less; Smarter Shopping. Better Living! Fit for adventure; For feet with a life; Pure indoor living.*

The slogans that represent the tactics of appeal to the consumer got slightly less responses – 12.7%. It is noticeable that this is expressed by the possessive and personal pronouns: Your, You, our and imperatives (an imperative mood of the verb) or interrogative sentence. For example: *Your store. Your style; Daily deals on things you love; We are all explorers; Already booked? Go far. Feel goods; Never miss a visitor.*

About 6.7% of the total respondents chose the slogans that represent the tactics of demonstrations of the organization's advantages and exclusiveness (*Express delivery and free return; Easy. Fast. Cheap; Expert Service. Unbeatable Price*); 4.5% - tactics of emphasizing competence, experience, traditions and values (*Since 1983; Handcrafted in America. Designed for Longevity; The Sole of Chicago; 18th street & Broadway NYC; Great British Style; An American original; Unique, authentic and always affordable; Finest Quality for Over 45 years!*). These low figures point to unpopularity and ineffectiveness of the aforementioned tactics among the potential clients.

The slogan that represents the tactics of using the store name ("*Carter's*". *Count on carter's*) was preferred only by 1% of respondents. The tactics of target group indication received no response.

The findings of the research and prospects for further research in this area

Considering the results of the choices of potential online-stores' owners and their potential customers we can make the following conclusions. The slogans which represent the tactics of goods or services naming are the leaders among the potential customers (28%) and it got almost a third (29.3%) of reactions in the second part of the questionnaire. So it is recommended to marketologists and strategic managers of the online-stores to create such advertising slogans that will represent the tactic of goods or services naming. It is the most effective and has the greatest pragmatic potential. With the means of this tactic it

will be easier and faster to persuade the customers to visit the site and to do shopping there.

Applying the tactics of using the store name was intellectual and failed. Also it is not worth using the tactics of target group indication. The respondents reacted to these tactics negatively.

So we see that communications with an immediate selling aim may appear more productive. Their direct results may be more easily measurable and it creates more competitive advantage. Brand strength, although it involves sales, is also about more than sales. It is about the ability of online-businesses to resist competition, to support a premium price, to weather negative publicity and thus to persuade the customers to purchase.

A well-chosen marketing communication strategy utilizes one or more components to disseminate the company's outgoing message. An appropriate tactic increases the company's chances to accurately transmit the product's benefits, and to have that message positively received by the customer. The online-store benefits from customer goodwill when the company story or customer testimonial strategies are used.

The effects of advertising slogans in themselves are rarely economic. Profits on most brands would increase in the short term if spending on communications were cut. But the return on these investments lies in the long-term economic value of advertised brands.

Summary

Online-stores which are supported with effective communications are more profitable, can command a premium price and are resilient to competitive activity. Effective communication means a constant choice of a communication strategy that in a particular situation will be the most favourable in achieving the business goal and the combination of several tactics will strengthen the strategic intention. So, being both strategic and creative, online-business becomes more proficient at running identity programmes, which presented fresh customers' orientations.

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