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Marketing communication of SMEs specialized in cosmetic industry in magazines for women

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Abstract

This article concentrates on marketing presentation of small and medium enterprises (SMEs); particularly in cosmetics industry (namely companies like Dermacol, Gabriella Salvete, Coty Česká republika, s. r. o.). The analysis is performed on 3 Czech mutations of worldwide magazines for women: Marianne, Elle, Cosmopolitan whose 2013 issues represent our research samples. The communication strategies are analyzed from two perspectives: firstly, we look at how these companies build their brand identities in the selected media, i.e. how these companies communicate with their target groups through these media samples and secondly, how (if anyhow) their strategy differs from those of their direct competitors. Another aspect of the analysis, we further concentrate on, is whether the choice of media influences the brand positioning on the market or not; whether there are differences in communication strategies depending on the chosen magazine; what verbal and nonverbal means are used taken into account company's overall communication strategy and the overall presentation of cosmetics segment in women's magazines in general. This study is methodologically based on a quantitative and qualitative content analysis of the selected media performed in SPSS which provides us with sufficient depth of research data showing interesting information about SMEs communication.

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1. Introduction

Marketing strategy and communication is not the privilege of large companies; it also plays a significant role in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Therefore, this study focuses on various types of marketing communication of SMEs that produce and sell cosmetics for women.

Companies use marketing communication to advertise various brands they sell to increase their prestige and image, attract more customers and increase their profitability (ignoring quality improvement, price reduction, innovation, etc., Jiráček & Köpplová, 2009, p. 137).

This article deals with commercial advertising as a form of marketing communication that influences consumer behaviour. “In order to sell their products or services and communicate their ideas and information companies use media for their advertising (...). Advertising is a marketing process and it is focused on public relations.” (Werner in Jiráček & Köpplová, 2009, p. 137) From the linguistic and communication point of view, advertising is characterised as “public impersonal communication. It is a form of marketing that provides information about a specific object via various communication channels (in particular via media). The aim of advertising is to change or influence views of the targeted audience about the advertised object in a long term.” (Šebesta, 1998, p. 194)¹ This type of communication is planned and persuasive as its intention is to attract and convince to buy (i.e. trigger an immediate reaction from the audience).² From the media point of view, communication goals and effects of advertisement belong to media influences. (McGuire, 1986, p. 173)³ However, specific forms of communication are different depending on the cosmetic brand. The following section deals with the analysis of marketing tools and motives that are used by cosmetic SMEs in magazines for women.

2. Press Advertising as the Main Form of Communication Mix of SMEs specialized in Cosmetic Industry

Cosmetic brands use various communication strategies and different parts of the communication mix in respect of their marketing. Cosmetic companies propagate their products in media and via internet; however we can also see their adverts on posters, transport means, bus stops, institutional programmes, shopping bags, bills, shirts or pens. They also use guerilla marketing, direct mailing, spam, etc. However, it is necessary to point out that the cosmetic brands in this study prefer traditional and proved forms of communication. It is mainly press advertising and then in some cases discounts, samples, bonuses, club cards, direct communication in the shop, exhibitions, web pages, social networks, such as online WOM⁴, events, sponsorship, etc.

Press advertising, such as magazines for women and lifestyle magazines, is the phenomena in the cosmetic industry. Various pages of such magazines are designed for cosmetic advertising which offers the potential for companies to attract future customers. (Jiráček & Köpplová, 2009, p. 136) When compared with adverts in television which are expensive, marketing in magazines and newspapers represents a good opportunity to approach a larger number of existing and new clients within a reasonable budget. (Krulišová, 2013, p. 21) Magazines also have various other advantages. They are sold in a large number of copies which means that they can reproduce a large number of information (although most of the magazines have more photos and images than text). Lifespan of information is also relatively long. On the other hand, magazines are regarded as a passive and slow form of marketing. In some cases, a high volume of adverts decreases the communication effectiveness. (De Pelsmacker, et al., 2003, p. 257)

A specific sub-category of magazines are magazines for women that are currently critically studied on academic grounds.⁵ They are also frequently discussed by general public – at social networks and in day-to-day interpersonal communication. Nowadays, magazines for women play an important role as they represent the marketing and lifestyle phenomena. However, in our opinion, they are not just a marketing tool as these types of magazines influence people with specific hobbies (such as cooking, culture or dating), lifestyle, fashion or style at certain age (usually between ages 18 and 55). Advertising text and images represent a significant part of lifestyle magazines.

1 For other definitions, including the legal definition, please refer to Pravdová, 2002.

2 Further conclusions and details can be found in other research areas, for example Windahl, Signitzer, & Olson, 1992.

3 In connection with effects of political campaigns focused on election behaviour, international and social campaigns focused on improvement of social behaviour, ideological campaigns and the media rituals.

4 Brand ambassadors, fashion bloggers.

5 Various studies show that magazines for women are researched more than magazines for men. The comparison is particularly from the gender point of view, see e.g. Baker, 2005.

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