

MODERN MARKETING

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Drawing and attracting the consumer attention is one of the biggest issues of modern marketing . This is the reason why they are looking for innovative forms of marketing. Papers presents the solutions and take special attention on metaphors in marketing.

Key words: marketing, metaphors, consumer, marketers

1. INTRODUCTION

Drawing and attracting the consumer attention is one of the biggest issues of modern marketing. Furthermore, the challenge includes the application dissemination and design tools for campaign properly perceived by a range of potential buyers. So the marketers ask themselves a question how to create advertisement to obtain appropriate consumer response.

Prior to design, the consumers' reluctance towards advertisements should be measured.

Polish consumers show more non-committal in their attitudes towards advertising. The thesis is proven by results of tests carried out by CBOS Central Opinion Polling Institute of 2005 concerning the opinion on advertising [CBOS, 2005]. They showed that almost half of the respondents (44%) think that they are forced to watch commercials, despite the fact they do not like them. Scarcely fewer, i.e. 34%, declared a more decisive standpoint, saying that they do not like commercials so much that they just avoid them. Only 17% respondents presented an approving opinion on advertising. Comparing the data with those of a similar survey in 1999, it is conspicuous that the reluctance has significantly grown. The percentage of people with approving attitudes has decreased by 3%. However, the group clearly avoiding commercials has grown by as much as 6% (compared to 28% in 1999). Considering the above data, it appears that the most frequent response of people to TV commercials is switching the television off or changing the channel (35%). Every fourth respondent, however, simply declared to go to another room leaving the television on and do something else while waiting for the end of commercial broadcast. According to 74% respondents, commercials are just boring. The group of respondents finding commercials irritating and annoying is smaller by one percentage point only. Considering information as one of the main functions of advertising, worrying is the fact that 61% respondents found commercials simply misleading. It is interesting that in 1992 as much as 49% considered commercials interesting and 58% assessed that they inform well. Although there was always a percentage of people reluctant to advertising, the latter used to have more followers. In early 1990's 40% respondents said that commercials were relaxing and entertaining.

In order to promote a brand or product effectively, the marketing specialists, in other words marketers, started to think about the inclination to buy and reasons for buyers'

decisions, as well as effective, innovative solutions in the scope of advertising and promotion.

2. RATIONALITY AND BUYERS' DECISIONS

The first theory that attempted to explain the purchasing behaviors of the consumers was the usability theory and one of its authors was W.S. Jevons [Rudnicki, 2005]. This theory suggested that „the main principle of individual behavior is hedonism – a tendency to maximize pleasure with simultaneous minimization of pain” [Rudnicki, 2005]. In other words, it was acknowledged that the consumer tends to maximize the usability of goods that equal to „the sum of satisfaction”

Another theory was: the improved theory of preference and selection. It took its mature form thanks to V. Pareto [Rudnicki, 2005]. It was based on the assumption of the consequence of selection. The assumption can simply be presented thanks to the equation:

$$A > B \cap B > C \Rightarrow A > C \quad [\text{formula I.1}]$$

In other words, assuming that all the three baskets of goods are at equal price, affordable to the consumer from their remuneration point of view, then a given buyer decides to buy basket A. He/she would never take the basket of goods C, because it is worse than B, while in turn B is worse than A in question of preference. The consequence and rationality of behavior are seen in this point.

Another attempt to develop the previous ones, was the hypothesis of disclosed preferences introduced by P.A. Samuelson [Rudnicki, 2005]. It changed the attitude to the notion of consumer's rationality. It was not the „consequence” of choice any more, but consisted in intrinsically harmonious choices in the close vicinity of choice actually made” [Rudnicki, 2005].

A totally different model is the consumer behavior theory by G. Katona [Rudnicki, 2005]. The economic factors in consumer behaviors have been analyzed so far. All the theories created by now based on *homo oeconomicus*, i.e. an individual basing on the economic benefits only, representing the foundation for the decisions made. Katona suggests a new solution in this point. He acknowledges that psychological factors instead of economic are significant. Attitude is the key. Following his way of thinking, the consumer may make an irrational decision from the economic point of view, due to the negative attitude towards the product. „G. Katona thinks that client's rationality is a characteristic of sensible, considerate selections, prior to which he considers various options and their consequences, discusses a purchase planned in the family or circle of friend, searches for more complete market information” [Kieźel, 2005].

According to Gerald Zaltman, „there is also a common concept that the consumer verifies the product's characteristics and then logically transforms the information and formulates his assessment based on this” [Zaltman, 2008]. Thus not only economists, but also marketers find the consumer a rational market player.

It appears, however, that rationality is vague, nevertheless. The consumers do not always do what they declare in the tests. For example, in April, 1985, the Coca-Cola Company decided to change the formula of its flag product cola [Keller, Aperia, Georgson, 2008]. It was to be their response to the risk that Pepsi-Cola started to create with their 'Pepsi Challenge' developed in Texas, USA. It was promotion of sales combined with blind tests, i.e. tasting of the same products of both brands without giving the manufacturer's name. Coca-Cola decided to respond to this attack, developing a new formula, closer to Pepsi that was a little sweeter. In order to check the effect on the consumers, blind tests were carried out on 190 thousand people. The tests showed that the new formula was widely approved and tasted by far better than the previous one. Coca-Cola, sure of success, announced the change introduced during an immense campaign that was to initiate and consolidate its leader position in the sector. To the management's astonishment, the consumers disapproved of

the "new" cola. The sales started to drop dramatically, and the headquarters received thousands of letters from dissatisfied consumers. Eventually the corporation surrendered and restored the „old" formula as 'Coca-Cola Classic', and leaving the new one on the market as 'New Coke'.

We could state that the consumers behaved irrationally. They did not want the new formula, although they had found it by far tastier. The point, however, is in the fact that the buyers not always follow purely logic prerequisites. After all, we cannot forget about how much subconscious factor influence their decisions, factors like experiences, memories, habits, etc. Contemporarily, the marketers forget how important are the emotions accompanying the purchasing process. In the latter example of Coca-Cola, attachment overcame reason. The management did not foresee that for majority of consumers Coca-Cola is not only "a composition of ingredients", but most of all a symbol of whatever is American, a certain way of life.

3. THE ROLE OF IRRATIONALITY

The first person to point out the role of unconsciousness was Sigmund Freud [Hall, 1987]. Although the existence of processes not subject to consciousness in our brain seems obvious to us, such statement was revolutionary to his contemporaries. It was thanks to his achievements that a human being stopped to be perceived as a fully reasonable person who always behaves logically. Therefore, Freud put more attention to what people do than what they say.

Every word given as a slogan evokes several associations, thoughts or images in people. In this point we need to emphasize that a human being is complex enough to produce different notions. Bread would be a traditional oval loaf for Poles, sliced toast bread for English people and a baguette for the French.

Gerald Zaltman in his book calls it the unity of mind, brain, body and society. According to him „the four elements create one consistent, dynamic system and are subject to mutual influences. Brain interacts with the surrounding social and physical world and body is the intermediary in this relationship. The body, by means of senses, received the information about the world, generates chemical and mental reactions that produce emotions and thoughts and moves under the influence of impulses coming from the brain." [Therefore, it is so important during the tests to treat all the factors as one common whole instead of analyzing them separately. The context accompanying the evaluation of decision-making process is of equal, if not by far greater importance to the consumer than his cool calculation and logic.

The problem is in the fact that the marketers, as a result of unconscious processes taking place in their minds may influence what the consumer discloses to them and what he hides. Therefore, the sequence of questions asked during marketing surveys is important, the location of such interview / survey, analytic instruments applied, etc. We should be careful and avoid suggesting any answers or clues in the specific subjects as this might disrupt the test results. The important decisions in the company based on them are even more so important.

Another question is the fact that, contrary to appearances, verbal language is not the most important means of communication [Zaltman, 2008]. Along with the context, words may change their meaning.

In everyday life it is easy to find numerous examples when people have difficulties with „dressing" their thoughts in words. Sometimes people simply cannot express what is going on in much more complex human mind. Edward Twitchell Hall, for example, an outstanding American ethnologist, analyzed the question of language in the 1950's. In his book *The Silent Language* issued in 1959 he enumerated ten „ *Primary Message Systems*" that compose the human communication. According to him, as many as nine out of them

base on non-verbal communication forms. The interpersonal communication only is based on linguistics.

4. THE USE OF METAPHOR IN MARKETING

For this particular reason the marketing specialists used metaphor as an instrument of promotion content communication. In the most traditional approach, metaphor (Greek *metaphorá*, means transposition) is „an expression being an unusual application or combination of words that in new circumstances or unions acquire a new meaning calle metaphorical. It is always created on the foundation of the existing meanings as their transformation, transposition, expansion, abstraction, etc.” It is treated here as a means of poetic imagination or rhetoric adornment related to words only. Applied in poetry it was to „decorate” poems, show their depth and force the reader to reflection.

The well-known researchers of metaphor in the cognitive meaning were Lakoff and Johnson [Lackoff, Jonhson, 1988]. They discovered „the presence of metaphor in everyday life, not only in language, but also in thoughts and acts. The system of notions we use in order to think is (according to them) metaphorical in its essence [Lackoff, Jonhson, 1988]. Thus it is mainly the expression of mental activity and secondarily it is expressed by means of language. Moreover they acknowledged, going into the psychical human sphere, that it characterizes ourselves.

Psychologists themselves became interested in this issue in late 1970's only when they found it a psychological phenomenon”. Allan Paivio compares metaphor to the solar eclipse [Chlewinski, 1989]. It obscures the object tested, however, when we look through the 'appropriate telescope', it discovers its new properties. It started to be used in psychoanalysis and psychology. For example, Milton Erickson [Barker, 1988], an American psychiatrist used metaphoric tales in order to help the patients learn about themselves, their reactions and attitudes.

In the book of G. Zaltmana and L. Zaltmana under the title *Marketing Metaphoria* another concept the marketing world is based on is presented. In their opinion, unlike that of writers, metaphor is not the presentation of a thought in terms of another thought. They understand the term in a wider way, also as similarities, analogies or other non-literary means of expression. Metaphor is a means of transposing unconscious thoughts to the sphere of consciousness. They divide metaphoric thinking into three levels: *surface metaphor*, *metaphor theme* and *deep metaphor*. The latter constructs what one thinks, hears, says and does. It is a way a human being perceives what surrounds him, giving a sense to experiences and guiding his further behaviors. Deep metaphor is according to them a product of the very cooperation of brain, body and society [Lackoff, Jonhson, 1988].

The classification of metaphors is worth mentioning. One type is suggested by the Zaltmans [Zaltman, Zaltman, 2008]. As a result of the tests carried out on more than one hundred clients in over 130 countries, they distinguished 7 main deep metaphors, common to almost all the sectors (finance, transport, groceries, etc.), regardless the origin of consumers and culture. They include:

- balance – containing the ideas of balance, addition maintenance or compensation of forces or things. It may refer to physical, moral, psychological harmony, etc.
- transformation – refers to the changes of conditions or status.
- journey – when consumers describe the aspects of life as a journey: long, difficult, fascinating, etc.
- container – may express the psychological, physical or sociological states; may protect us, be open, closed, etc.
- connection – comprises the feelings of belonging or exclusion,
- resource – when something is described as resource or wealth,

- control – when a human being refers to something characterizing it as the extent of control.

Based on this, Gerald Zaltman, developed a special technique of discovering metaphors, called ZMET (*Zaltman Metaphor Elicitation Technique*). In order to be able know the consumer better, the marketer needs to follow the 'deep stage', which is defined by the authors of *Marketing Metaphoria* as *workable wondering*. Thus they understand the use of empirical, raw and adequate information called the 'workable knowledge' to analyze the clients' thoughts and engage imagination. It means something more than common information gathering. It means a deep penetration of the consumer's inside opened before the researcher. It demands reading between the lines, finding new data hidden under those already familiar. In other words, it is the intrusion in the unconscious level of consumer behaviors and thoughts.

According to G. Zaltman and L. Zaltman,, metaphor may help in the achievement of this deep insight. Through testing and analysis of consumer metaphors we may compare what they really experience to what they tell about such experience. Moreover, a deep metaphor is inseparably correlated with emotions. One cannot understand the latter without the former. So testing deep metaphors is to help in definition which emotions are significant for a brand name. This means discovery what feelings influence the consumer perception of their needs as well as people, brands and companies offering their satisfaction. Understanding the anatomy of such experiences, allows for acquisition of knowledge and their engagement, introducing metaphoric instruction in product design, environment of points of sale or other means of communication. However when metaphors become the key factors in emotion identification, research on metaphor properties is not equivalent to emotion measurement.

5. SUMMARY

Summarizing, the marketing specialists, acting on the marker of high competition, frequently using incomplete research, burdened with errors, among buyers who often make irrational decisions, are forced to apply more and more extraordinary instruments to attract their attention to the product. And this is metaphor that may play an immensely important role in the process of communication with the consumer, because, as a result of its properties, it may reduce the risk of misunderstanding on the marketer – consumer line.

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