

## **Advertising in the marketing communications system**

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## **1. The Concept of the Marketing Communications System and Its Role within the Marketing Complex**

In general terms, marketing communications (from the word communication-meaning contact or message) can be defined as a unified system that integrates the participants, channels, and methods of communication. It should be emphasized that the role of the marketing communications system is steadily increasing.

Marketing communications, in their activities, are directed toward specific individuals and various firms that influence the movement of a product toward the consumer.

As one of the most important components of the marketing mix, the marketing communications system ultimately contributes to the achievement of a company's overall marketing objectives.

The following aims are subordinate to these general objectives and serve to develop and support them:

- To persuade the consumer;
- To identify, shape, and actualize consumer needs;
- To maintain good relationships between the organization, the public, and partners in marketing activities;
- To build a positive image of the organization;
- To inform the public about the organization's activities;
- To attract the attention of target audiences to the organization's operations;
- To provide information about the company's products;
- To develop consumer loyalty toward the company's brand;
- To convince and influence;
- To foster a preference for the company's brand and create confidence in the necessity of purchasing it;
- To stimulate purchasing actions;
- To remind consumers about the company, its products, and related offerings.

## **2. Advertising within the System of Marketing Communications**

Advertising is regarded as an essential component of marketing. The main argument supporting this view lies in the fact that marketing, in developed countries, encompasses all aspects of the modern economy. At every stage of

marketing activity, there exists a direct or indirect connection with advertising operations.

Within a unified marketing strategy, advertising exerts an active influence on production, leading to the achievement of commercial results by taking market demand into account.

A distinctive feature of modern advertising-as a logical component of the marketing system-is not merely the creation of demand, but the management of it within a carefully selected consumer segment. The market, first and foremost, represents a collection of segments that reflect consumers' tastes and demands. For companies, the objective is not to scatter their efforts across the entire market but rather to penetrate the chosen segment as deeply as possible. Secondly, by identifying changes in demand that serve as the basis for product and advertising differentiation, firms can more accurately tailor their strategies. Product differentiation simplifies advertising activities and enhances their effectiveness. The volume of profit and the amount of funds required for advertising generally depend on the degree of differentiation.

At present, the variety of products being produced is becoming increasingly complex. Consumer demand is now influenced less by the physical properties of goods and more by factors such as brand image, delivery and service convenience, guaranteed repair conditions, and similar characteristics. These have emerged as key determinants of demand. Today, in international markets, one of the most important elements of a product's attractiveness is the level of post-sale services provided.

Thus, on the one hand, advertising is gradually becoming a flexible, non-price tool for stimulating product sales. On the other hand, it is transforming into a new form of integrated advertising information communication.

Depending on the specific market situation and the objectives set accordingly, advertising can effectively perform the following functions:

- Informing: Creating awareness and knowledge about a new product, a specific event, a company, and similar subjects.
- Persuading: Gradually and consistently developing a favorable perception of the company's image and its products among the target consumers; convincing customers to make a purchase; encouraging the act of buying, and so forth.
- Reminding: Maintaining consumer awareness between purchases; keeping information about the product in the consumer's memory; and reminding them where the product can be obtained.

Without applying the achievements of modern sciences and new methods and tools, it is impossible to achieve the highest level of effectiveness in advertising within today's business environment. Among these sciences, communication studies play a particularly significant role. This discipline-or, more precisely, an entire set of related disciplines-examines the general principles governing the formation and functioning of human interactions.

A scientific approach to studying advertising requires viewing it as one of the forms of human communication. The essence of advertising lies in the creation of mutual interaction-in the advertiser's attempt to establish communication channels with the target audience. Otherwise, advertising is perceived merely as a formal collection of various sources and distribution channels, lacking coherence and, consequently, effectiveness.

### **3. The Fundamental Laws of Communication Theory**

Our aim is to outline the fundamental issues concerning the essence of communication, to examine the system of social communications, and to determine the role that advertising plays within it. In addition, our task includes analyzing the simplest model of advertising communication and studying its main components.

The term "communication" (from the Latin *communicatio* - "to share," "to connect") has been used as a scientific concept since the early twentieth century. Today, communication is interpreted as the process of transmitting and receiving socially conditioned information through various channels with the help of different communicative means, both in interpersonal and mass communication contexts.

At least three principal and most widely accepted approaches can be distinguished in understanding this concept:

1. Communication as a material connection - any object in the physical world serving as a means of contact. Within this approach, one can identify such types of communication as transportation, energy, and waterway systems.
2. Communication as interaction - the transfer of information from one person to another.
3. Communication as social influence - the transmission and exchange of information aimed at influencing society.

Among these, the second and third approaches involve the transmission of knowledge, meaningful emotions, and volitional impulses within human society. Therefore, unlike transport or energy communication, these two types of social communication possess content.

It is evident that, from the perspective of studying advertising communication, the third approach - communication as an instrument of social influence - is the most relevant.

Advertising communication itself should undoubtedly be regarded as one of the forms of social communication, for advertising cannot exist outside human society. If we consider the roles of participants within the communicative process as the basis of social communication, then the following main types can be distinguished:

- Interaction (dialogue): communication between equal partners;
- Imitation: the adoption by some members of society of the behavior, communication patterns, lifestyle models, and habits of others.
- Control: the purposeful influence exerted by the sender on the receiver through a directed message.

Despite the receiver's objective independence from the sender, advertising is considered one of the instruments of control. Imitation can also serve as a means of influencing the message recipient. Communication can be classified according to numerous characteristics - verbal or non-verbal, synthetic, formal or informal, oral, written, or printed, domestic or international, intra-cultural or cross-cultural, and so forth. Among these classifications, the number of participants serves as an important criterion for determining advertising's position within the overall communication system. Based on this principle, the following types of communication can be distinguished:

- Intrapersonal communication: communication within an individual (a person's internal dialogue).
- Interpersonal communication: interaction between two individuals.
- Small group communication: involving 3 to 8 participants.
- Public communication: involving approximately 10 to 30–100 participants; at this stage, an active communicator and a passive audience are identified.
- Organizational communication: typically involving more than 100 participants, though sometimes fewer (for example, in small enterprises or organizations). At this level, hierarchical communication arises - from upper management to subordinate levels.
- Mass communication: involving more than 1,000 participants, including large public gatherings (such as meetings, demonstrations, or performances) as well as the mass media.

#### **4. The Main Tools of Advertising Communication**

Although all types of communication - from interpersonal to mass - are relevant to other marketing communication tools such as direct marketing, sales promotion, and others, advertising in most cases belongs to the category of mass communication. The main functions of social communication are generally defined as follows:

1. Informative function – the transmission of information;
2. Expressive function – the expression of not only informational meaning but also evaluative or emotional content;
3. Pragmatic function – the ability to influence the receiver by giving a directive or instruction that prompts a specific response.

As we can see, advertising as a form of communication is capable of performing all three of these functions. Thus, it may be concluded that each of the three social communication functions operates during the process of influencing the recipient through advertising.

In summary, advertising can be defined as a specialized sphere of mass communication aimed at exerting purposeful influence upon various audiences of advertisers, assisting them in achieving specific marketing objectives.

If we consider the general model of social communication, the following becomes clear: The traditional communication scheme includes a source of information or message sender. Messages are then transformed into specific signals - in other words, they are encoded. These signals are transmitted through communication channels to the receiver (or reception device), where they are decoded and thus reach their destination in an understandable form.

Furthermore, the process involves certain filters (limitations), the feedback response from the recipient, and the influence of random factors - known as noise - that may distort or interfere with communication at any stage of its implementation.

The specific characteristics of advertising communication are largely determined by the functional purpose of advertising itself - that is, by its ability to influence the consumer while simultaneously fulfilling the sender's specific commercial objectives.

Let us briefly examine the main elements of advertising communication. First and foremost, it is necessary to emphasize the central role of the receiver (the addressee) in this scheme. The various components of the communication process from encoding to feedback are shaped by the parameters and characteristics of the intended target audience.

The sender (communicator or source of communication) is the party on whose behalf the advertising message is addressed to the audience. To establish

effective communication, the sender must first clearly define the purpose of the message, accurately identify the target audience, and determine the desired feedback or reaction.

The communicator's emotional influence on the target audience, as well as the psychological message and the informational content, are conveyed through the message (or appeal). A communicative message is always dual in nature: it consists of both an ideal (conceptual or mental) aspect of meaning and a material aspect that can be perceived through the senses. The unity of content and expression is achieved through symbols.

From symbols, texts are formed. Thus, a symbol represents the simplest unit of a code, ensuring the correspondence between a single meaning and its expression. When a symbol or object conveys additional meanings beyond its primary one, it becomes a sign or emblem. For instance, a coat of arms serves as a state symbol, while various religious icons function as symbolic representations.

In constructing an advertising message, both verbal (spoken or written) and nonverbal methods of communication are employed. In nonverbal communication, symbols such as gestures, posture, and body movement are used to convey meaning. For example, in a series of Lipton tea commercials, gestures were skillfully utilized as a language of symbols: the motion of a hand mimicking the dipping of a teabag into a cup has become recognizable as the brand's distinctive sign. Similarly, in Nescafé advertisements, the rhythmic tapping of a spoon against a cup serves as a symbolic gesture indeed, the Nestlé company has officially registered this as a trademark.

## **5. Encoding in Advertising Communication**

Encoding in advertising communication is understood as the process of presenting a communicative idea to the recipient through texts, symbols, and images. All these forms constitute the subject of study of *semiotics*, a branch of communication theory.

Semiotics is the science that studies the general properties of signs, as well as the structure and functioning of sign systems capable of storing and transmitting information.

Depending on the nature of the relationship among signs, three main branches of semiotics can be distinguished:

- Syntax - the relationship between signs within a speech chain (the relation of sign to sign);

- Semantics - the relationship between signs (as forms) and the real objects they denote (the relation of sign to referent);
- Pragmatics - the relationship between signs and the sender or receiver (the relation of sign to human interaction).

It should be emphasized that all three branches of semiotics play a crucial role in advertising practice. The achievements and techniques of syntax are used in the development of textual advertising. The practical aspects of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics are essential in shaping an advertising message and in evaluating its impact on the recipient. It must also be noted that when an advertising message is being formulated, the communicator must ensure that the code employed is familiar to the recipient. Otherwise, the effectiveness of the communication will be significantly reduced.

In 1998, the Spanish advertising agency Guach DDB created an advertisement that was featured at the Cannes Lions Festival. At the beginning of the commercial, an image of a camel moves from the upper left corner of the screen toward the center. As is well known, the camel is widely regarded as a symbol of endurance and resilience. Next to it, technical information about the car's fuel consumption per 100 kilometers appears on the screen. From the bottom right corner, an image of a cheetah moves toward the camel. Even a middle school student knows that the cheetah is the fastest animal on Earth, symbolizing speed. Simultaneously, information about the car's speed capabilities appears on the screen. When the camel and cheetah meet in the center, they kiss - a symbolic act representing union. In the context of the advertisement, this signifies the combination of durability (functionality) and speed. The short commercial ends with the slogan that reinforces its main idea: "Always together!"

Such vivid and meaningful codes are frequently found in highly professional advertisements. For instance, one may recall the Winterfresh gum commercial, where "frost marks" are left on a mirror after exhaling - a creative visualization of freshness. Another example is the Flatron television commercial, where a special visual effect shows a veil being lifted from people's eyes, symbolizing clarity and superior image quality.

A noteworthy example from Russian advertising practice demonstrates effective symbolic use as well. The commercial opens with the music from Eldar Ryazanov's famous comedy "Beware of the Car". The text at the beginning reads: "Recommended by Yuri Detochkin..." Then follows information about local dealers offering anti-theft car systems. The key to understanding this message lies in recognizing the cultural code - it is meaningful only to those familiar with the film. Those who have seen the comedy know that Yuri Detochkin is, in fact, an

almost professional car thief. This background gives him a humorous kind of expert authority in matters of car theft prevention. However, Detochkin is not an ordinary thief. In the film, he is portrayed as a kind-hearted man who donates the money from sold stolen cars to orphanages. Thus, the filmmakers created a complex and sympathetic character, one who even evokes positive feelings among car owners. For this reason, the advertising slogan mentioned above resonates immediately with “those in the know,” triggering a warm and humorous response.

Let us consider an example of an unsuccessful use of code in an advertising message. In the early 1990s, one real estate company produced a television commercial on the “Ostankino” channel, intending to demonstrate the dynamism of its operations in the field of property sales. The commercial was based on a wordplay titled “Moving Real Estate.” In the opening frames of the video, a beautiful small house located in a picturesque forest is shown. However, as the camera slowly zooms out and pans backward, it becomes evident that the house is actually placed on a vehicle platform. Amidst the sound of rustling trees, the hum of an engine starting is heard, and the platform, together with the house, begins to move out of the frame. The audience, however, interpreted the message quite differently. As a result, the company received several phone calls from individuals wishing to hire the firm to transport large cargo rather than to purchase real estate.

In particular, when dealing with a foreign audience, the issue of “encoding and decoding” becomes extremely important. Differences in national mentality and cultural values can lead to very different reactions to the same message.

As an example of semantic distortion, we can consider product names that unexpectedly sound inappropriate or comical in other countries. In Russian-speaking regions, several such cases have been observed. For instance, the brand names Blue Water (a type of mineral water), Caloderma (a skin cream), Rikala (a tea brand), Wash & Go (a shampoo), Wicpa (a chocolate), and Dyry (a soap brand) often evoke laughter among Ukrainian speakers, since in Ukrainian some of these words resemble “ospa” (smallpox) or “obmanyvayu” (I’m deceiving). Another example is the Serbian baby food brand Vledina, whose name is practically untranslatable because its homonym lies outside the limits of acceptable vocabulary — in other words, it carries an obscene meaning.

Likewise, the Ukrainian car model Tavria-Nova may also encounter difficulties in Spain, since the word “nova” in Spanish literally means “does not move.”

Alongside such negative examples, there are also cases where the name of an advertised product harmonizes well with the language of the target audience.

For instance, the slogan “Tide that keeps cleanliness” has become so natural and familiar in urban speech that it has turned into a kind of popular aphorism.

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