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## Museum dialogue as an important component of marketing communication of a brand

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# Museum dialogue as an important component of marketing communication of a brand

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**Abstract.** Transformation of marketing communication is firstly determined by such tendencies as decrease of influence of traditional advertising, growth of awareness and consumer independence and creation of impression culture. The response of business to new tendencies is the implementation of new methods of marketing communication with target consumers. The article considers brand museum as a part of brand communication and therefore brand companies can meet consumers' requirements, communicate with consumers and create consumer value, implement brand into their lifestyle. The analysis is carried out with the help of Th. Gad's four-dimensional branding model. According to the analysis we identify typical characteristics which are necessary for successful brand communication: creation of brand space where consumers can get more information, discover and investigate; interactivity as an opportunity to get one's own impression from interaction with a brand (to play a role, to test a product, ask questions (to take a sensible part in museum events)) and share your opinion with others; dialogue relationships with consumers; brand enrichment due to impressions which are not connected with trade.

## 1. Introduction

Museums are different: some of them are devoted to outstanding personalities, others are devoted to famous brands. Nowadays more and more museums are interactive, they are created by companies which own brands in different fields and spheres of activity. Thus Volkswagen Group opened a museum and park complex Autostadt (Wolfsburg, Germany) where all brands of the concern are exhibited. Heineken created Heineken Experience in Amsterdam, this exhibition centre allows visitors to learn the history of the company and follow the process of brewing interactively and taste beer. We can also name the following museums: Intel (Santa Clara, California, USA), Corning glass museum (Corning, New York, USA), Swarovski (Wattens, Austria), Gucci (Florence, Italy), Christian Dior (Granville, France), virtual Valentino's museum (<http://www.valentinogaravanimuseum.com>), Burberry World Live (London, UK), Ramen noodle Museum (Yokohama, Japan), Luxottica (Agordo, Italy), La Maison des Fondateurs of Audemars Piguet.

The modern competitive situation on the market requires companies and their brands to create and save effective and mutually beneficial relationships with real and potential clients. As a result, entrepreneurs are constantly looking for ways of contacting with target audience or improving the existing ones. Contact ways are numerous and different situations, places and interfaces of clients' interaction with brand. In other words, every time when consumers contact with brand, real and potential clients take buying decisions which are critically important for business. If the company has more effective contact ways, it means that it expands and strengthens its brand in a consumer consciousness. There are universal contact features almost in all fields and spheres of business: commodity (its name, design and package, layout in a shop, user's guide, guarantee and etc.), service (its name, its presentation, consumers' comments, quality and conformity certificates), advertising, commercial offers, company's documentation, site, groups in social networks, corporate cars, trade personnel of the company (competence, appearance, uniform, smile, posture and speech patterns) and



personnel of call-centres, office space decoration and etc. It is necessary to note that corporate culture is an important component of brand marketing communication because namely company employees, who contact with consumers, form the image of any brand [1].

However, the use of contact brand features is certainly an unsuccessful communication strategy because brand-owner company loses an opportunity to compete in a consumer consciousness, to occupy mental space more widely and also to interact with different target audiences. That is why each company tries to find a number of unique long-term contact ways in order to occupy a strong position in consumers' consciousness. Brand museums are unique long-term ways of contacting with consumers.

## **2. Analysis of brand communication with the help of Th. Gad's branding model**

### *2.1. Four-dimensional brand space model by Th. Gad*

Let's analyze practices of marketing brand communication with target audiences in the form of museum with the help of Th. Gad's four-dimensional model. According to P. Feldwick brand is a number of perceptions in a consumer consciousness [2]. Thus brand is a property of a consumer because it is formed in his consciousness. In its turn the place, which it occupies, is a brand space. Th. Gad thinks that brand space is the reflection of company's individuality and it includes the following dimensions in the memory of potential clients:

1. Functional dimension of space means concrete benefit of commodity use, its unique characteristics (for example, specific style, presentation's methods and specific knowledge).

2. Social dimension characterized by social activity determines company's attraction which forms loyalty, expresses how brand supports communication with its potential clients and identifies itself with a certain social group (for example, a number of contacts, clients' comments, creation of brand community).

3. Mental dimension means a brand capability to influence people; to help them to develop personally when they contact with a company; to reflect ideas supported by brand (client training, seminars, books and messages: as a rule, mental dimension is expressed in an advertising slogan).

4. Spiritual dimension is a brand capability to contribute to welfare of each person and to social development (for example, environmental responsibility for future generations). In many cases this dimension is reflected in the mission of organization (sponsorship and charity) [3, 4].

Surely, the division into functional, social, mental and spiritual dimensions is very relative. Their interconnection is explained biologically, psychologically and socially. For example, there is no mentality as a separate psychological process in practice (and thus there is no mental dimension of brand space separated from the rest): mentality needs to get direct impressions from objects of the world (their functional characteristics through different sense organs). In addition, to support its image brand needs to exist not only in one dimension, but it should constantly interact with consumers using as many dimensions as it can. Otherwise, the perception integrity will be broken and brand will disappear in consumers' consciousness, it can be forgotten or has a passive form in people's consciousness. Thus, brand concentrated only on functionality (quality, technical product innovation and etc.) is oriented to failure when its functionality is copied by competitors. Besides, on the overcrowded competitive market functional characteristics have the second position and they concede emotional features which are formed by other three dimensions. However, if brand concentrates on feelings (social and spiritual dimension) or consumer idea (mental dimension), it will be sold rather better than brand concentrated on functionality but during a limited period and it won't make a revolution in its field.

Thus, the division of dimensions is relative and its aim is to describe the conception and content of marketing communication process which reflects the most important features in a concrete situation. This division also allows to analyze the effectiveness of management decisions in the field of brand marketing communication.

## 2.2. Analysis of BMW's museum as an example of brand communication

We are going to analyze a brand museum with the help of Th. Gad's model. The creation of the museum is aimed at strengthening brand's positions in consumers' consciousness and searching new contacts with them according to four dimensions. For example, BMW Group opened BMW's museum in 1972 (Munich, Germany). Nowadays the museum consists of four thematic zones: BMW's world, BMW's plant, BMW Group Classic. The museum organisation reflects four brand space dimensions of BMW according to Th. Gad's model. BMW's museum includes exhibitions of modern and conceptual cars, motorcycles, aircraft engines, propellers and aviation equipment. Exhibits are aimed to fill the functional dimension of the brand in consumers' consciousness and to attract attention to definite functional features and advantages of the plant's production as a whole. There are several reasons to create the museum zone which is responsible for the brand space in consumers' consciousness:

- creating the controlled image of the brand for a target audience which is more informative than any other instrument of marketing communication (for example, site, brochure or social networks): the museum is the source of information which accumulates facts about activity, ordinary life and unique facts from the history of the company;
- giving opportunities of comparative competitive analysis, demonstration of functional competitive advantages of the production brand (consumers look for definite features assessed in the terms of relative value and choose that commodity from the diversification on the market because they think that these goods are very useful from their point of view (combination of necessary features));
- influencing different sense organs of potential clients (exhibits allow consumers to get information about a product with the help of all sense organs, other formats of brand communication rarely provide such opportunities: consumer can interact with the product actively (see, hear, touch and etc.));
- demonstrating status of a brand owner (experience, professional activity and stability).

As we have noted, the limitation of one functional component of the product is not reasonable for the future brand: functional characteristics of a product make clients compare market offers of different producers; moreover, the more options are offered to study, the more efforts and time are necessary to make a buying decision, and the probability of choosing a competitor's product increases. That is why BMW is looking for new ways to capture social, mental and spiritual dimensions of the brand in consumers' consciousness.

According to social dimension consumers are interested in other people's opinions, and this interest influences their buying decisions because they are eager to make desired impressions on their social environment. To use social space brand-owner companies attract famous persons because target audience can associate itself with these celebrities. By possessing BMW brand person associates himself with other people and cultures. This technique is mostly used and aimed at associating with ideals: companies attract celebrities who are well-known in society; this association provides consumers with a psychological feeling of uniting with their idol. There are different scenarios of celebrities' participation: for example, he can recommend (praise benefits of a product thanks to his personal experience); give permission to use his name or image for advertising a product without being an expert in this field, he can participate as an actor in the advertising and etc.

Filling mental space of BMW brand in consumers' consciousness means to address to his intelligence, and it is aimed at learning, solving problems, analyzing and generalizing, it makes consumers surprise and get interested in novelty, originality, comparative effectiveness, thus promoted product and brand become a part of the field of cognitive and evaluative activity of consumers. As a result, consumers can have intellectual feelings which reflect their attitudes, thoughts, reasons, process and results of their intellectual activity: ability of being surprised is a stimulus of cognitive activity; consumers feel doubt when discrepancy of hypotheses and fact assumptions causes a thorough check of data; work results in feeling of confidence and satisfaction or disappointment and dissatisfaction and etc. In other words, the main task of marketing communication, which is aimed at filling mental space of BMW brand in consumers' consciousness, is provision of information about a promoted

product and activation of thinking process, creation of cognitive feedback. In brand communication focused on mental dimension the following features of mental processes can be used:

- reference to experience in memory, knowledge of previous generations (establishing connections and relations between things and phenomena a human relies on influence of these things and relations, his previous experience from his memory, and uses knowledge and experience of previous generations);
- tight connection of thinking and speech (external and internal);
- human's thinking with the help of abstract concepts and symbols.

Communication campaigns of this type have different graduation and are usually followed by offscreen comments to the screen text, and always use such thinking operations as association, comparison, abstraction and concretization, analysis, synthesis, generalization, analogy, reasoning and etc.

The example of activation of a cognitive need is teaser advertising of BMW which intrigues consumers and causes curiosity. Creating an incomplete image in consumers' consciousness teaser advertisement generates a cognitive need which is satisfied by information about benefits of advertised product contained in its main part. The effectiveness of this advertising is determined by data of psychological researches which show that 80 % of all people feel a strong discomfort in cases of incomplete images in their consciousness [5].

Spiritual dimension of brand space means leaving pure commerce and basic consumption. In the example this dimension manifests in the union of BMW with art. Thus, BMW creates art guide (private collection guide), restaurants on the territory of BMW's World, and also slogan 'Fruede am Fahren' which attracts attention of potential consumers not to functional benefits of a product but to pleasure of driving the definite car. BMW museum sends a message to external audience thus referring to spiritual space of the brand. For example, the use of modern materials and technologies in the exposition shows that all modern technologies are used in production process of the plant. Art object becomes a metaphor of technology showing how it works under unusual conditions. Charity is one more way to use spiritual component of brand space [6]. Examples of BMW advertising charity in Russia are different social projects aimed at improving life of children (Easter party for children from orphan asylums and etc.).

Thus BMW uses four dimensions of Th. Gad's model which allows this brand to emphasize its creative character and provide their clients with new impressions that are not connected with such definitions as good product or good service. Moreover, initiatives in the sphere of art help BMW to create an emotional connection and have a dialogue with the whole audience discussing interesting themes. BMW museum provides facts from the history and helps to explain and prove the importance of the enterprise activity for a country and for a person. The attitude to the history allows to analyze projects and developments of the company over time.

### **3. Marketing space in brand museums**

The tendency of creating special zones of communication with brands in the form of the museum is being used more actively nowadays. Their main task is to create brand communication between a brand-owner company and its potential consumers. This museum is a completely special type of marketing communication which means dialogue with a client. Visiting a museum opens the channel of communication which is responsible for process of learning information and its memorization. This communicative technique reflects observer and there is an effect of mirror where each visitor of a museum can reflex his own problems and can get a new internal experience creating a dialogue model of communication.

Brand is becoming a social and cultural phenomenon which interacts with society interactively. It gets features of culture, thus spiritual dimension of brand help consumers to find their role and identify their mission in society, take responsibility [7]. Undoubtedly, the formation of this model of communication demands efforts to create conditions which provide similar personal discoveries. Such efforts include offering another type of spending time, different from visiting traditional museums.

Brand museums offer breathtaking stories about past and future of their brands thanks to logic of their existence and development. The logic of museum exposition can be based on owner's autobiography which can be interesting for audience. Brand museum tells real and potential clients its legend in form of emotional dialogue which is the basis of other kinds of communication. This legend contains important message of brand: how and when it appeared.

As a rule, museum collections include exhibits connected with its legend, and these exhibits can be seen, tasted, touched, heard or smelled. Emotions and empirical feelings are additional non-material characteristics of brand museum. Services of such museums are specific: they can be perceived, felt, created and clients can participate because educational and entertaining elements are an integral part of brand. Exhibits in such museums are the following: packages, labels, advertising brochures, costumes from advertisements and etc. Brand museums offer creative communication and consumer experience interacting with brand. If we compare brand museums with traditional museums, we can notice the greatest difference between them, because in brand museums you can touch everything: children and adults push buttons, pull the rope, look into windows, smell, taste and etc. As a result, impressions from a museum visit are greater than from watching a commercial [8].

Brand museum is like a huge children entreating room where you can shout, be awkward, laugh, meet your favourite characters and overeat sweets. Thus consumers in the atmosphere of holiday and fun become less critical and more trustful easily. Consumers are moving towards the choice of pleasure and game and there is even a term 'kidult' when adults strive to become children. Brand museums allow to focus marketing communication on the internal world of a consumer, to use children's perception of the world and thinking, to add fantasy and illusion to the space of reality. In this atmosphere brand penetrates easily into the consumers' consciousness. Brand-owner companies with the help of museum space create a material world turning their brands from a number of associations and images into the objective reality which has a structure, rules of organization understood by every visitor of a museum. All similar museums are united by the theme of a definite brand and connected with a definite product category: chocolate, children's constructor, car and etc. Each museum is divided into thematic zones showing stories: each zone presents a definite product (chocolate or car). Visitors can feel the atmosphere of a brand thanks to designers and artists who create a reality of the history of a company. Consumers' emotions involve them into the atmosphere of pleasure and entertainment and subsequently they are associated with brand provoking emotional connections [9]. Marketing communication with potential consumers is subjective, thanks to positive emotions visitors feel satisfied and happy and they are grateful to brand museum where they manage to get such feelings. Brand strives to make consumers' dreams come true (for example, Christmas magic world of Coca-Cola), to create unforgettable impressions and emotions in the process of communication and thus to contribute to stable emotional connection of brand with the target audience. Brand offers their guests to satisfy their needs (dreams, emotions) through goods which can subsequently become elements of consumers' lifestyles. In a museum brand uses not only material but psychological, emotional and social needs of people. Consumers strive to satisfy their emotional and aesthetic needs in the process of brand communication. As a result brand in consumers' consciousness begins to be a combination of important values and emotions, and it is able to create and strengthen specific relationships with clients. Loyalty to brand is created gradually through definite emotional feelings and emotional experience from interaction with brand [10].

That is why brand museums try to increase the probability of rich and various museum feelings by offering the diversity of interaction opportunities, different events for museum visitors of different ages.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Thus, the result of this interaction is the following: consumers change their attitude to brand and to company, they begin to perceive brand as a living creature with its character, individual and unique features. Associations with a personality help brands to provide a desired differentiation on the competitive market. Brand becomes a part of people's life offering definite emotional benefits from

possessing it: bright and impressive moment of life. Afterwards the created emotional connection between a brand and a consumer results in making decisions about purchases due to emotional feelings and experience, and it decreases influence of rational thoughts based on logic. Hence, the form of museum communication allows brands:

- to provide recognition;
- to guarantee emotional connection with a consumer;
- to create psychological benefits from contact with him;
- to provide great involvement of consumers;
- to form and increase loyalty;
- to distance from competitors.

Brand museums have all prerequisites to become leading in modern marketing communication processes of company. The object environment of these museums with their specific atmosphere of brand worship is simultaneously space, condition and reason for brand communication. Here visitors-consumers have time to think about brand, to talk about it, to speak with their family members and museum visitors about brand. Museum exposition provokes communication including virtual talks because it contains special photo zones that make consumers share their impressions with their friends, colleagues in social networks in the Internet.

Finally, brand museum helps to improve communication, to inform consumers about product and its producer. Brand museums are aimed to create relationships and contacts with governments, local community and target audiences. Ideally, in brand museums visitors begin to share brand values and beliefs, and they lead to further promotion of brand.

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