

THE ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF SELECTED COMMUNICATION CHANNELS ON THE SELECTED CITY POPULATION' OPINION

Bačík R., Mihal J., Fedorko R.*

Abstract: The aim of the article is to describe specific aspects of communication media in city marketing from the perspective of city residents. The article clarifies the impact of selected marketing communication channels on building a positive image in the eyes of the population, and proposes a model of the efficient use of these channels focused on the satisfaction of citizens. In assessing the direction of the issue the article summarizes the theoretical basis of public relations in the online environment, the issue of public opinion and image. Another aim of the article is to evaluate the opportunities this issue brings for marketers while pointing out its pitfalls.

Key words: marketing communication channels, public opinion, communication strategy of a city, city's image

Introduction

The Internet as a new medium entails new ways of communication with citizens. It should be noted that modern marketing communication will not do without the Internet today. The Internet can generally be characterized as an available globalizing medium while being a modern platform for a variety of activities operated electronically. Communication in this manner substantially accelerates. From the point of view of a Municipal Office the Internet is mainly used to run websites of a city. Such websites are now an inevitable part of every city's life. Effective online communication and professional official websites bear competitive advantage (Harasimová, 2009; Smarandache and Vlăduțescu, 2014). Public relations is shifting to the virtual world where it tries to communicate with a wide, otherwise difficult to grasp public (Dimová, 2010). Scott (2010) adds that after a long period of exclusive focus on traditional media, thanks to the Internet public relations became a real public relations where different forms of online content allow organizations to communicate directly with their customers. We can find many authors dealing with these issues, such as Bodnar and Kohen (2012); Bačík et al. (2014); Shih et al. (2013); Halligan and Shah (2014); Stefko et al. (2014); Hutchinson (2012); Pulizzi (2013). According to Gaya (2007) online public relations is the process of building and maintaining customer relationships through online activities in order to facilitate the exchange of ideas, thoughts, products and services that meet the objectives of both parties. Websites, as a web presentation of a city, are a cornerstone of city's

* **Doc. PhDr. Radovan Bačík, PhD. MBA, PhDr. Ján Mihal, Mgr. Richard Fedorko, PhD.**, University of Prešov in Prešov - Faculty of Management
✉ corresponding author: Radovan.bacik@unipo.sk
✉ JanMihal@evil-ke.sk; Richard.Fedorko@Unipo.sk

presence on the Internet. Generally, it is a simple way to explain to citizens what they need to know. On the website a city can publish basic information about itself, news, events, information about a city hall and so on. Through websites, a city can also easily answer citizens' questions (Foret, 2011; Štefko et al., 2014b; Fishkin and Høgenhaven, 2013).

Public relations in the Internet environment is all about convincing the public to positively comment products or services of the organization. Such a strategy can be applied also to the city marketing as well. The nature of the Internet, in contrast with off-line environments, makes it possible to connect people that are interested in discussing the organization and its components without any geographical limitations (Watson and Noble, 2007). It is not necessary to emphasize that public opinion plays in the society very important role, mainly in the evaluation and assessment of important social issues. Its role and function depends on the sources of information with which media operate, the quality of individual media, the risks of majority opinion dominance to the detriment of minority, the so-called spiral of silence, the influence of the public opinion with arguments that do not have a rational character, the elite's control (Price, 1992). We can find many authors concentrate on these issues, such as Blumrodt and Palmer (2014), Štefko et al. (2014a) and Fuchs (2014).

According to Albiga (2007), the public opinion is an opinion that can be pronounced in public without this leading to sanctions against any person who promotes the view. This sanction can be, for example, ridicule, contempt, social isolation, physical assault, and the like. The public opinion therefore relates to the people's prevailing view we can find out by conducting a sociological research. However, the people's prevailing view is sometimes not identical with the public opinion, as those questioned, when face to face with an interviewee, may express views that otherwise would not have been accepted. Pagano (2003) in this regard states that since a person can have only limited amount of information from personal experience, he/she is nevertheless forced to have opinion on a number of different people and events. In practice, a person must use the information from the second hand - experience and views of those who he/she perceives as an authority in order to formulate a view on the outside world and other people. People can then form their opinions under the influence of what they see, hear and read, and it is understandable that a battle for what they have to and do not have to see, hear and read rages around them every day. If we want to effectively influence public opinion, it is necessary to attract the attention of the target group, provide satisfactory information, motivate them to participate in the solution-seeking, and call them to action. However, often there is no need to go through the whole chain. In general, the image is a picture of something in the mind of the individual, it expresses how an individual perceives the given organization or product. One possible definition states that the image is a psychological view linked to the discovery that what the customer buys reflects his overall personality, which is then formed not only by technical parameters, but also ideas, opinions

and emotional qualities that a person connects with a product. The image can also be seen as the public image of the organization's identity, which creates both internal and external entities (Vysekalová and Mikeš, 2009; Melewar et al., 2005). Thus, the image substitutes knowledge and mediates easier orientation, affects perception and consumer behavior in relation to the company. Therefore, companies try to create a fair idea of their corporate personality (Morgan, 2006; Vysekalová, 2011). On the other hand, the definition of the city's image as a relationship between identity and image can be found in the following description, where identity is how the city itself sees itself. The image is how a city perceives the public and its citizens. The connecting element between identity and image is a communication, or integrated marketing communication. It follows that the image is the outer reflection of one's identity (Skořepa et. al, 2008; Lynch, 2004; Morgan et al., 2004).

Methodology

The aim of our analysis was to identify possible differences in the impact of selected print and online marketing communication media on the opinion of the population of a given city. In order to obtain empirical material we used exploratory method of data collection - a questionnaire. Data was collected through subjective statements of surveyed respondents – residents of Prešov. Data collection was conducted from January to March 2014. Respondents were randomly approached in the city center, but also individual city parts, we also reached out to the active seniors clubs. Using online tools for data collection (GoogleDocs) we compiled a questionnaire form that had been sent out with the consent of the persons concerned through the available e-mail addresses, and the link to the online form of the questionnaire was shared also on dominant Facebook pages concerning the city of Prešov with the note that the form should be filled out only by citizens of the city of Prešov.

With regard to other mathematical and statistical examination the questionnaire used the so-called Likert Scale, which is used to measure people's attitudes and opinions. Using this scale a respondent can choose from a variety of agree / disagree options of various range. The subsequent mathematical and statistical verification of established hypotheses was carried out through the statistical program SPSS.

The basic set for the purpose of quantitative research accounted for the inhabitants of Prešov, who are permanent residents of the city. The research sample consisted of 926 respondents. Their age ranged from 15 to 95 years. Of the 926 respondents 375 of them belong to the group 15-25 years of age (40.50%), 216 respondents belong to the group 26-35 years old (26.33%), the group 36 to 45 years of age accounted for 126 people (13.61%), 95 respondents belong to the group 46-55 years of age (10.26%), the group of 56 to 65 years of age old accounted for 48 respondents (5.18%), 38 respondents were of the age range 66-75 years of age

(4.10%), the group 76 to 85 years consisted of 22 respondents (2.38%), and 6 respondents belong to the group 86 to 95 years of age (0.65%).

Table 1. The average age of respondents

| N | Avg | Median | Modus | Minimum | Maximum | Disp. | Variance |
|-----|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 926 | 34.43089 | 28.00000 | 22.00000 | 15.00000 | 88.00000 | 269.4909 | 16.41618 |

The average age of respondents was 34.43 years. The median was calculated at 28 years, the largest group consisted of respondents aged 22. The oldest respondent was 88 years old, the youngest 15 years old. Standard deviation indicates that about two thirds of respondents aged 18.01 - 50.85 years old. The following table shows that, even though the survey included more females (65.12%) than males (34.88%), nearly each category consisted of the same number of men and women.

Table 2. Age of the respondents based on gender

| Age | Men | | Women | | In total | |
|---------|--------|------------|--------|------------|----------|------------|
| | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage | Number | Percentage |
| 15 - 25 | 144 | 44.58 % | 231 | 38.31 % | 375 | 40.50 % |
| 26 - 35 | 85 | 26.32 % | 131 | 21.72 % | 216 | 23.33 % |
| 36 - 45 | 32 | 9.91 % | 94 | 15.59 % | 126 | 13.61 % |
| 46 - 55 | 18 | 5.57 % | 77 | 12.77 % | 95 | 10.26 % |
| 56 - 65 | 20 | 6.19 % | 28 | 4.64 % | 48 | 5.18 % |
| 66 - 75 | 16 | 4.95 % | 22 | 3.65 % | 38 | 4.10 % |
| 76 - 85 | 6 | 1.86 % | 16 | 2.65 % | 22 | 2.38 % |
| 86 - 95 | 2 | 0.62 % | 4 | 0.66 % | 6 | 0.65 % |
| SPOLU | 323 | 100.00 % | 603 | 100.00 % | 926 | 100.00 % |

When researching the education background of the respondents, the largest proportion of respondents was secondary school graduates with a share of 52.16% of respondents. PhD graduates were the least represented with a share of 1.94%. The following table and graph provides a detailed overview of the structure of respondents by their education. As for the time spent living in Prešov, 67.71% of respondents stated that they have been living in Prešov since birth. The smallest share of respondents (14) stated that they had not been born in Prešov but they have been living there from 10 to 15 years (1.51%).

Results

The analysis of attitudes and preferences of respondents toward marketing communication media focusing on the identification from what communication channels most respondents receive information about events in Prešov found that the Facebook profile of the current mayor of Prešov JUDr. Pavol Hagyar

dominates, as it was selected by 512 respondents, amounting to 55.3%. The second most powerful medium was the official website of Prešov (www.presov.sk), selected by 118 respondents, amounting to 12.74%. The third most powerful communication tool is daily newspapers Korzár (including their official website), as selected by 76 respondents (8.21%). Prešov radio was placed fourth with 53 respondents (5.71%). Prešovský mesačník, fortnightly newspapers ECHO, Prešovský večerník (including their official website) and Facebook in general was chosen by 2% as a source for obtaining information about the city of Prešov. Other channels are used only by a little less than 1% of the selected sample of respondents. This question was not answered by 32 respondents (3.46%).

Prior the analysis of the relationship between the opinion of city residents and the type of communication media (online vs. print), we assumed that the people using the web feeds are more positive about Prešov than people gathering information from print media. For this assumption we have formulated the following hypothesis:

H1 - We assume that the people using Internet information channels have more positive opinion about Prešov than those who gather information using print media.

The following table (Tab.3) summarizes the results of the descriptive analysis of residents' opinion on Prešov in print as well as web media channels.

Table 3. The descriptive analysis Internet/Print

| Compared media | M | σ | n |
|----------------|--------|----------|-----|
| Internet | 129.44 | 39.756 | 677 |
| Print | 141.72 | 36.002 | 163 |

Note: M - the average score, σ – standard error, n – sample size

Data given in the Table 4 inform about the results of the Mann-Whitney U-test between the Internet and print infochannels given the opinion of people on Prešov. The results of Mann-Whitney U-test groups showed significant differences between the groups (U = 43420.00, P = 0.000) at the significance level 0.05.

Table 4. Mann-Whitney U-test Internet/Print

| Compared media | U | Z | p |
|------------------|----------|--------|------|
| Internet - print | 43420.00 | -4.227 | .000 |

Note: U - Mann-Whitney U, Z – z – score of the U-test, p – significance

Prešov residents who use the Internet feeds have statistically significant higher opinion of Prešov than residents who read print media. The result was statistically significant at the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. After the analysis, the hypothesis:

"We assume that the people using Internet information channels have more positive opinion about Prešov than those who gather information using print media" is confirmed.

Summary

It should be understood that any city that wants to provide their inhabitants with favorable conditions for life and succeed in the growing competition from other cities cannot do without municipal marketing (Skořepa, 2008). Thus, the image of the city is the sum of all the attitudes, knowledge, experience and visual impressions and feelings that are associated with the city. It should be stressed that the image of the city is formed within the target groups, namely among city's residents, businessmen, tourists etc., and encompasses a subjective interpretation of the city's image in the mental perception of each individual or target group, which has both a selective (standing out among other cities) as well as integrative (perception of the city as a separate unit) meaning.

The examined issue of communication of cities and municipalities within the city marketing is a vast area of knowledge that is constantly evolving hand in hand with technological advances in communications technology. On the basis of the research we encountered other possible areas of research, like the deeper and more detailed examination of the possibilities of using online communication channels of the city when communicating with its target audience.

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ANALIZA WPLYWU WYBRANYCH KANAŁÓW KOMUNIKACJI NA OPINIĘ POPULACJI WYBRANEGO MIASTA

Streszczenie: Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie określonych aspektów środków komunikacji w marketingu miasta z perspektywy mieszkańców miasta. Artykuł objaśnia wpływ wybranych kanałów komunikacji marketingowej na budowanie pozytywnego wizerunku w oczach społeczeństwa i proponuje model efektywnego wykorzystania tych kanałów skoncentrowanych na zadowoleniu mieszkańców. Artykuł podsumowuje teoretyczne podstawy public relations w środowisku online, kwestie opinii publicznej i wizerunku. Innym celem artykułu jest ocena możliwości, jakie daje to marketingowcom, zwracając jednocześnie uwagę na związane z tym pułapki.

Słowa kluczowe: kanały komunikacji marketingowej, opinia publiczna, strategia komunikacyjna miasta, wizerunek miasta.

的選擇的通信信道的所選擇的城市的人口'看來影響的分析

摘要：本文的目的是從市民的角度描述了城市營銷傳播媒介的具體面。文章闡明了選擇的營銷傳播渠道建設的正面形象，在民眾的心中的影響，並提出了有效的利用這些通道集中在公民的滿意度模型在評估該文章的發出的方向總結了網絡環境的公共關係，公共輿論形象問題的理論基礎。文章的另一個目的是評估此帶來的營銷問題 同時指出其缺陷的機會。

關鍵詞：營銷傳播渠道。公眾輿論。在城市的傳播策略。城市形象