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CREATION OF THE BRAND OF REGIONAL PRODUCTS AS AN ELEMENT OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT®

Kreowanie marki produktów regionalnych jako element rozwoju lokalnego®

Key words: branding, regional product, local development.

Branding of regional products in local development is very important. These products are part of both building the national identity of many regions of the EU that produce and sell them, as well as being unique in terms of taste, utility, but also safe for health. Awareness of their existence and full identification is low. After all, a product brand includes not only word and graphic elements, but also, and perhaps most importantly, all the feelings and associations associated with a branded product or service, which ultimately influence customers' purchasing decisions.

Słowa kluczowe: kreowanie marki, produkt regionalny, rozwój lokalny.

Kreowanie marki produktów regionalnych w rozwoju lokalnym jest bardzo ważne. Produkty te są elementem zarówno budowania tożsamości narodowej wielu regionów UE, które zajmują się ich produkcją i sprzedażą, jak również są niepowtarzalne pod względem walorów smakowych, użytkowych, ale także bezpieczne dla zdrowia. Świadomość ich istnienia i pełnej identyfikacji jest mała. Marka produktu obejmuje bowiem nie tylko elementy słowno-graficzne, ale również, a być może przede wszystkim, wszelkie odczucia i skojarzenia związane z produktem lub usługą sygnowaną daną marką, które w ostatecznym rozrachunku wpływają na decyzje zakupowe klientów.

INTRODUCTION

All over the world, countries, regions and even localities are competing with each other. This competition is not only about resources or finding a domestic or foreign investor, but increasingly about tourists and even future residents (especially young ones). One way for individual administrative units to improve their competitive position is to develop a recognizable image. In order to be noticed among competing regions, it is necessary to stand out. A distinct, original, unambiguous and attractive to buyers image is therefore extremely important to ensure the success of the marketing efforts of places.

Food products are increasingly clearly divided into industrial and high-quality foods. The latter, if it has EU or national certification, is counted as culinary heritage. Thus, the way a dish is prepared is based on traditional ways of making it resulting from the history of the region. In addition, the raw materials used in a given dish have specific characteristics resulting from natural conditions peculiar to a particular place. Such products are mainly produced on a small scale, which means that their uniqueness becomes a unique resource of the area, which can be used when building promotional strategies for particular places.

Poland is a country with great traditions, having excellent conditions for producing food products of high quality and unique taste parameters. Biodiversity combined with

a beautiful landscape provide an excellent basis for the development of a market for traditional foods. Consumers are increasingly choosing to purchase regional products in order to, among other things: experience the flavors of a particular region. Traditional and regional products are characterized by high quality and a certain chemical composition, so for those who care about healthy eating, it is an interesting proposition.

BRAND CHARACTERISTICS

The purpose of this study is to analyze the impact of regional product branding on local development. From the buyer's point of view, there are many factors that guide them in choosing regional products. They can be divided into three groups, namely economic, socio-cultural and psychological factors. However, in determining consumer preferences, one must always keep in mind that every individual is different, and it is not easy to determine exactly what guides them in choosing such products.

Branding was seen solely as an identifier to emphasize ownership and originality. At the beginning of the 20th century, it began to serve primarily the function of distinguishing the products of a particular manufacturer from those of other manufacturers. Over time, however, with increasing competition, the brand began to be viewed not only through the prism of benefits for the manufacturer, but primarily in

terms of added value for the customer. This has given rise to a different view of the role a brand plays [1].

In the ISO international standard (10668:2010), it is defined as a pertinent, marketing function-related intangible asset including (but not limited to) names, terms, signs, symbols, logos and graphic designs or combinations thereof, intended to identify goods, services or entities, or to create distinctive images and associations in stakeholders, thus generating economic benefits. It should be noted that the definition quoted above, although it seems to reflect well the economic sense of a brand, is not the only one found in the literature. It can be defined in different ways. This undoubtedly demonstrates the complexity of its essence and multidimensionality [2].

Indeed, a brand includes not only the verbal and graphic elements that are expressed in a trademark, but also, and perhaps most importantly, all the feelings and associations associated with a branded product or service that ultimately influence customers' purchasing decisions.

According to De Chernatona, brand is a multifaceted concept, the understanding of which is often shallowed and reduced to visual aspects. The multidimensionality of this concept is well illustrated by the iceberg metaphor. What is perceptible to the customer and what is colloquially interpreted as a brand constitutes only about 15% (logo, name, slogan), the remaining 85% are the invisible processes (such as committed personnel, their skills, well-developed logistics process, etc.) that create added value inside the organization, and it is these that give brands a competitive advantage [3].

Competitive advantages are enjoyed by those companies that have managed to build brands that win the trust and loyalty of buyers. Creating a good brand is a difficult and lengthy process, the success of which largely determines whether a company can succeed in the market. A brand, on the one hand, provides benefits to buyers and its owner, while on the other hand, the strength of a brand creates barriers that competitors must overcome in order to occupy a certain market position.

De Chernatony further points out that one of the biggest challenges in the brand-building process «is to coordinate all value-adding activities to achieve an integrated brand.» The subject of analysis in this paper is the concept of regional branding. It is variously understood and used in different contexts [3]. The following interpretations of the concept can be found in the literature:

- regional brand, by which is meant a brand built for products intended for and sold in a particular regional market, such as beer market brands, mineral water brands), juices and other products; investors of such brands are now often large transnational corporations;
- regional brand understood as the brand of a regional product, i.e. a product traditionally produced in a given region based on the resources and heritage of a given region and closely related to its identity. These are most often food products, such as oscypek, thatch's povidla, Podhale bryndza, sękacz, etc., but also textile products (such as Koniakow lace) or other products (such as Podhale ciupaga), and regional tourism products (such as the Trail of Wooden Architecture, the Land in Check, etc.) [4].

Many inexperienced entrepreneurs focus on developing the visible elements of the brand – the name, logo, packaging, etc. These activities are, of course, necessary to bring a product to market, but they should be the result of some general assumptions, the so-called brand strategy [8]. This is a short document that synthetically describes the essence and uniqueness of the brand, outlines how it should be positioned. This strategy may include such elements as the profile of the target segment, the benefits of buying the brand, the personality/archetypes of the brand, the essence of the brand, etc., and is the basis for further more detailed undertakings – it determines the points of contact between the consumer and the brand (e.g., it influences not only the choice of the brand name, the appearance of the logo, but also the form and content of the advertising message, the design of the packaging and many others). Brand strategy does not have a formalized structure or form. In fact, any professional branding or advertising agency has its own proprietary strategic tool.

Closely related to the brand strategy is the brand communication strategy. Well-planned marketing communications support the implementation of the brand strategy (it can even be assumed that without effective communications it is not possible to implement the brand strategy) [8]. One of the many brand-building strategies for agricultural commodities is to emphasize their geographical origin and/or traditional and/or organic recipe. This is social quality-building, requiring close cooperation between the various links of the market channel in agribusiness, which manage common resources, called club goods such as quality marks [5].

Competitiveness is defined as the potential for opportunities and the ability of a market entity to meet competition. This, in turn, refers to the process leading to the presentation of one's own offerings to consumers as more advantageous than others in the same industry. Rival entities seek the same benefits, at the same time and with the same rules, and the realization of the interests of some threatens the realization of the interests of others. Competitiveness determines the position of an entity from the point of view of its resources, capabilities, opportunities and potential in relation to the market structure [9].

REGIONAL PRODUCT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

P. Bryła through regional products defines the concept of collective brand (shared brands). According to him, on the basis of economic theory, collective brands take on the characteristics of club goods because, on the one hand, they are characterized by exclusivity (they remain in the possession of a specific economic unit), on the other hand, they are non-competitive in nature (all partners can reap the benefits without harming the others). The image of regional and traditional food products is shaped by the brand of individual producer groups, as well as the collective brand, which is based on the image of geographical uniqueness or ways of producing products. It is important that the effect of transferring the image of the area of origin to the product is stronger the less financial resources the producer has. From the point of view of business development, the use of collective brands based on the area of origin increases the attachment of companies to a particular region through specific access to raw materials and

the location of production itself. And thanks to the strategy of offering regional and traditional products, competitiveness is increased, especially for micro, small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, who would not be able to create their strong brand on their own [4]. It should be noted that in the case of a collective brand, it is crucial to create its identity, build its reputation and protect this reputation by all participants. Thus, the promotion of regional products through a collective brand is not only conducive to maintaining existing markets, but also serves to win new ones. It also serves to protect local traditions and customs, environmental order and the stability of the area of origin. When creating the promotion of an area, it is worth noting that consumers can be influenced by various characteristics of traditional and regional products, both objective and subjective. In promotion, one can refer to the natural qualities. External features related to, for example, the way the product is produced, processed and consumed can be used. These features can refer to the subjective, material or symbolic qualities of traditional and regional products. Appealing to emotions gives the idea of «being part of a community,» and to ethical or cultural values is perceived by consumers as protecting tradition, supporting local producers or favoring environmental protection. It is also possible to use features that emphasize the social status of consumers (these products, due to cost-intensive ways of producing them, are much more expensive than products of so-called industrial food). When using offers to promote the culinary heritage of a region, two models can be used:

- in the first place, show the region, city, place and say: «come here, stay here, visit us, because there is a lot going on here»;
- start with the product: offerings, events, happenings. First show what is happening, and only then – where the customer will find us [7].

The literature points out that the second approach is better, as tourists choose attractions and places that offer these attractions. However, it should be borne in mind that at the outset, regional products are certainly a resource, not at all necessarily perceived as a reason for tourist travel (an element of the tourist product) on their own. Instead, they are an added value to a particular region, helping to distinguish it from its competitors and playing a key role in assessing visitor satisfaction. However, the evaluation of a particular place will depend on the number and quality of all places offering these products. It is worth mentioning that promotion only supports the consistent policy of local authorities in the management of an area. Here, too, originality and creativity begin to count, and so, for example, in several small Italian cities, decision-makers have come to the conclusion that they have no chance in competition with large and well-known tourist destinations and have begun promoting the slow cities program. They advertise themselves as places where life is slower, but more comfortable and stress-free, thus safer and longer. The process of promoting a specific territorial unit involves recognizing the needs and desires of the audience, then shaping an appropriate offer, communicating available information about it, offering this offer at the right time, place and price, selecting the right tools and using them consistently. Promotion is like any investment, which may or may not help gain a competitive advantage [6].

SUMMARY

Regions, like cities, are viewed in terms of a product. Like any product, a territory requires strategic, long-term action to stand out from the competition. Image campaigns of regions shape the offer and convey their proposition to the addressees (investors, tourists, residents), but the key to the success of promotional and image campaigns of cities and regions is the idea of reaching the audience. In the age of globalization, it must reflect the uniqueness of the of a given place, which is why territorial marketing reaches for uniqueness, from here it is only a step to use regional cuisine, which is a tourist attraction of a given region on a par with natural and anthropogenic values. However, in order to attract the interest of potential tourists, it must be a finished product, in which gastronomic proposals will be combined with tourist and cultural offers, events, heritage and history of the region. A good promotion must also not lack excitement. The inclusion of regional culinary in the promotion of the region by example shows that joint marketing of the region and the catering industry is possible. The product provides an opportunity to extend the season and reach new groups of audiences, including foreign customers. By promoting specific culinary events, restaurants and the chefs working there, a luxury brand of the region is built. There are many benefits of having regional products in a region, namely: use of natural resources and activation of the local population, capital or cultural inputs that have been blocked or are not fully utilized, increase the development of the region, strengthen economic activity, diversify products in the region, promote the region and cultural heritage, introduce new strategies for action, by mobilizing local actors, promotion for small businesses, increase the value of the product and traceability, protection in the home territory and throughout the European Union.

PODSUMOWANIE

Regiony, podobnie jak miasta, postrzegane są w kategoriach produktu. Jak każdy produkt, terytorium wymaga strategicznych, długoterminowych działań, aby wyróżnić się na tle konkurencji. Kampanie wizerunkowe regionów kształtują ofertę i przekazują swoją propozycję adresatom (inwestorom, turystom, mieszkańcom), jednak kluczem do sukcesu kampanii promocyjnych i wizerunkowych miast i regionów jest pomysł na dotarcie do odbiorców. W dobie globalizacji musi odzwierciedlać wyjątkowość danego miejsca, stąd już tylko krok do wykorzystania kuchni regionalnej, która jest atrakcją turystyczną danego regionu na równi z walorami przyrodniczymi i antropogenicznymi. Aby jednak wzbudzić zainteresowanie potencjalnych turystów, musi to być gotowy produkt, w którym propozycje gastronomiczne zostaną połączone z ofertami turystycznymi, kulturalnymi, wydarzeniami, dziedzictwem i historią regionu. W dobrej promocji nie może zabraknąć również emocji. Przykład włączenia kuchni regionalnej w promocję regionu pokazuje, że wspólny marketing regionu i branży gastronomicznej jest możliwy. Produkt daje szansę na wydłużenie sezonu i dotarcie do nowych grup odbiorców, w tym klientów zagranicznych. Promując konkretne wydarzenia kulinarne, restauracje i pracujących w nich szefów kuchni, budowana jest luksusowa

marka regionu. Korzyści z posiadania produktów regionalnych w regionie jest wiele, a mianowicie: wykorzystanie zasobów naturalnych i aktywizacja miejscowej ludności, zablokowane lub nie w pełni wykorzystane nakłady kapitałowe lub kulturowe, przyspieszenie rozwoju regionu, wzmocnienie aktywności gospodarczej, dywersyfikacja produktów w regionie, promowanie regionu i dziedzictwa kulturowego, wprowadzanie nowych strategii działania poprzez mobilizację lokalnych aktorów, promocja dla małych firm, zwiększanie wartości produktu i identyfikowalności, ochrona na terenie macierzystym i na terenie całej Unii Europejskiej.

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