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THE MARKETING COMMUNICATION INNOVATIONS IN RELATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS OF CATERING ENTERPRISES – CASE OF POLAND®

Innowacje w komunikacji marketingowej w relacjach z klientami
przedsiębiorstw gastronomicznych – przykład z Polski®

The article of the study was the analysis of innovative activity in the field of marketing communications in companies catering in Poland for 2014-2016. It has been shown that in most companies changed the aesthetics of the interior of the premises or introduced other creative modifications, eg. new dishes, menu cards, logos, or whether the ambient. Managers implemented new or significantly changed ways of communicating with the client, including the methods of selling and providing services (eg. e-marketing, delivery of meals at home). The effect of the marketing novelties implemented was to increase the range of product or service offer, company prestige and share and competitiveness on the market.

Key words: innovations, marketing communication, customers, catering enterprises, relations with customers.

Celem artykułu jest analiza aktywności innowacyjnej w obszarze komunikacji marketingowej w przedsiębiorstwach gastronomicznych w Polsce w latach 2014-2016. Wykazano, że w przedsiębiorstwach najczęściej zmieniano estetykę wnętrza lokalu lub wprowadzano inne twórcze modyfikacje, np. nowe potrawy, karty menu, logo, obiektu czy otoczenia. Przedsiębiorcy wdrażali nowe lub istotnie zmieniali sposoby komunikacji z klientem, w tym również metody sprzedaży i świadczenia usług (tj. e-marketing, dostawa posiłków do domu). Efektem wdrażanych nowości marketingowych było powiększenie asortymentu oferty produktowej lub usługowej, prestiżu firmy oraz udziałów i konkurencyjności na rynku.

Słowa kluczowe: innowacje, komunikacja marketingowa, klienci, przedsiębiorstwa gastronomiczne.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the gastronomic services market, rapid technological and technical progress as well as permanently changing customer needs and expectations influence the importance of maintaining and building their loyalty. In addition, increasing globalization, intensified competition and increased access of consumers to modern technologies necessitate increased innovative activity of modern gastronomic enterprises. Close and lasting customer relationships allow companies to achieve many benefits related primarily to improving communication, reducing costs, increasing turnover and providing better, more satisfying customer service [16, 24, 32, 42].

Innovative activity is primarily related to the development and implementation of technical, organizational and marketing innovations, such as research and development, the purchase of licenses, purchase and assembly of machinery and equipment, and the construction, extension or modernization

of buildings or technological lines to implement innovation, implementation work, personnel training or marketing of new and modernized products [28, 34]. The ability to create and implement new products is the foundation of progress and determines its economic dynamism on the market [7, 10, 29, 37].

Nowadays, in such a competitive market, for the sake of sustainable management, catering companies are forced to focus on strengthening customer satisfaction [11, 43]. Modern enterprises attract consumers with convenience, time savings and diversity of offered products and services. Enterprises must distinguish themselves by something unique, which is the most interacting in a multi-sensory way, so that the customer can have as many positive associations as possible with a given place or product. Traveling, staying in an unusual gastronomic establishment and eating meals there are both learning about the atmosphere of a given place, as well as interesting flavours of dishes or original cuisine [12].

The aim of this study is to analyze selected aspects of innovative activity in the field of marketing communication in catering enterprises. A research hypothesis was made: innovative activity and effects of these activities demonstrated in catering enterprises in Poland show differences due to the period of functioning on the market, the area of basic activity and the financial standing of the catering enterprise.

To achieve the aim of the study and to verify the presented research hypothesis, the results of secondary data based on a critical analysis of the literature and primary research from individual interviews with persons responsible for management processes in catering establishments were used.

MODERN MARKETING SOLUTIONS THAT BUILD CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS CATERING COMPANY

Satisfied and loyal customers are the largest capital of every modern enterprise. The key to success is the emotional bond and care for customer satisfaction that favors consumer loyalty. Loyalty and trust are the result of a strong relationship with the client company [6, 26, 41, 45].

Strong and long-term relationships between the company and its clients, from the point of view of maintaining a competitive advantage on the market, are becoming more and more important in the service sector. These relationships should be of a reciprocal nature, guaranteeing constant communication and unrestricted flow of information between the service provider and the client. The interpersonal nature of services fosters the building of such ties and allows for achieving a number of benefits, mainly acquired as a result of mutual information exchange, mutual planning and risk sharing, reconciliation of activity ranges or joint investments. These include: better communication with the client, better organization of customer service processes, faster adaptation of the offer to the customer's needs and increasing sales [16].

Modern competitiveness is facing many difficulties, mainly due to the increasingly frequent emergence of new technologies and platforms. In order for companies to be innovative and successful, managers have to face these challenges [9]. Therefore, enterprises are increasing the efficiency and continuous efforts to improve the quality of their services by introducing state-of-the-art marketing management and communication support applications [33]. Also the Polish market of gastronomic services in the last decade has been dominated by IT system solutions that support activities in the field of marketing as well. Solutions are used to facilitate customer access to the offer and information about it. Catering companies on their websites post information about operating hours, the range of the offer, menus, additional services, and present photo galleries. Specialized portals allow for quick retrieval of the consumer catering offers, compare prices, get to know the opinion of other users on the quality of services provided. In addition, among the modern technologies are used, among others: Smartphone's to book a table or ordering dishes in a stationary or delivery to a designated place, tablets or interactive tables instead of information folders or menu cards in a restaurant. Payments for services rendered can be made online, and special applications allow the use of loyalty programs, which entails financial benefits [3, 36, 47]. IT

systems intended for gastronomy are also designed to speed up the service and make it easier for the owner or manager of the premises to manage the company. Properly selected software affects the acceleration and improvement of the service, as well as the reduction of losses resulting from staff errors, bad dispensing of articles or theft [4].

Regardless of the type of input product or service, the trader must communicate with its customers through a broad marketing activities. Therefore, marketing innovation means the use of a new marketing concept or strategy, e.g. changes in the way the service is presented, promoted, positioned, priced or distributed. It is a reflection of human creativity and is closely related to the skilful use of resources [15, 17, 28, 42].

Table 1 presents examples of innovative activity on the Polish market of gastronomic services in this area.

To shape relationships with the client, you can use a well-functioning and satisfying loyalty program that customers want to belong to. This type of marketing creates a stable and beneficial network of customer connections [21, 45]. These programs are specially designed by enterprises in order to create the differences in features and adequate customer care. The behaviour patterns and emotional reaction of consumer towards rewards in loyalty program and membership system itself play a role in terms of enhancing the purchasing of the existing customers and drawing new clients [2, 5]. The main task of loyalty programs is to reward regular, selected clients with attractive and targeted offers only. The most common forms of loyalty programs are: cards of regular customers (entitling to various types of discounts); company periodicals for clients containing information about the company, current offer; letters to buyers (facilitate the transfer of relevant information); hot phone lines (a method of direct communication with clients); advising consumer clubs and creating offer co-designers from them; joint, special events of a special events nature, in order to create a family atmosphere between the company and clients [6, 21, 30, 45]. In addition, in gastronomy, hot spots, bookstores, concerts, performances, shows, sports events, galleries in premises, as well as special playgrounds etc. [36]. Businesses are increasingly looking for innovative solutions in the field of marketing, which will enable them to successfully acquire new customers and strengthen relationships with current buyers and, consequently, improve their competitive position. Marketing innovation innovations implemented by them should increase the value of the entire offer perceived by the buyer [42, 44].

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To the goal of work were used individual data from individual structured interviews conducted in the period 2014-2016 with persons responsible for the management and implementation of innovative actions in the 99 catering establishments. The scope of research included news regarding marketing activity, which includes all improvements in communication, concluding transactions and providing information, both at B2B and B2C level. The study takes into account the diffusion to the level „new for the enterprise”.

The statistical package SPSS 24 (Imago4.0) was used to analyze the data. The study specifies the percentage of enterprises that have implemented selected forms of innovation. A statistical analysis was carried out using the

Table 1. Examples of innovative marketing activities in catering enterprises in Poland

Tabela 1. Przykłady innowacyjnych działań marketingowych w przedsiębiorstwach gastronomicznych w Polsce

The catering enterprises	
1. Product design	Activities consisting in increasing the attractiveness of the product or restaurant and its brand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes in the appearance, form and color of the logo of the institution or the introduction of a completely new logo • changes in the appearance, form and color of the environment • new concepts of interior premises • new menu card • posting information on the composition, nutritional value, allergens in the menu
2. Product placement	Activities involving the introduction of new guest service methods and sales channels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new forms of customer service (self-service, mixed-up, service) • new opening hours of the facility, location of the facility • virtualization of premises, presentations in 3D • modern forms of table and meal reservations (ordering via the www website, reservation system, a mobile application on a smartphone or tablet, etc.) • modern forms of food distribution - delivery to the customer, classic catering, event catering, mobile (food truck), etc. • new technologies: GPS, SMS, WAP, chips, biometrics, remote fingerprint reading and proximity interfaces • new market segments (clients)
3. Product promotion	Activities consisting in introducing new concepts of brand promotion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cards or programs, loyalty applications authorizing rebates, advisory consumer clubs (co-designers of the offered product), special, joint events with the character of special events, etc. • wine tasting, special dishes etc. • organizing competitions where the reward may be a meal at the cost of the premises, announced by stationary or via websites • bonuses in the form of another product included free of charge when purchasing a selected product from the offer • advertising eg. Social media, blogs, etc., POS TV, animations / tasting, new equipment exhibition, price promotions, discounts, advertising on the facade of the building, own website • use of a known person shown as a user in advertising.
4. Pricing	Activities related to the price of the offer, consisting primarily of its periodic reduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promotional price cuts, not lasting longer than 1-2 weeks • happy hours - a specific time interval during the day in which the promotional offer applies • last minutes - last-minute offer, etc. • offers of promotional dishes such as a dish of the day or lunch, usually in a more attractive form and price for the customer, etc.

Source: The own study based on [35, 39]

Źródło: Opracowanie własne na podstawie [35, 39]

chi2 independence test showing whether there is a statistically significant difference in the number of enterprises that have implemented selected forms of innovation between gastronomic premises. The strength of the relationship was assessed on the basis of V-Cramer's contingency coefficient.

Taking into account the organizational and legal forms among catering enterprises, the majority of companies operated as: economic activity of a natural person (35% of entities), limited liability companies (25%) and civil (13%).

One of the elements differentiating the surveyed entities was the length of the operating period on the market. Among catering enterprises, the largest share were young entities operating up to 5 years (45%), then above 15 years (21%), then 10–15 years (19%) and 5–9 years (15%) respectively. These enterprises usually operated on the local market (67% of entities), to a much lesser extent on the regional and national market (8 and 12% respectively). Only 13% of these enterprises had an international reach.

The surveyed catering companies conducted business activity in the following Polish provinces: Mazowieckie (about 75%), Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Łódzkie (2 companies each) and 1 company each provinces in Dolnośląskie, Lubelskie, Opolskie, Śląskie, Świętokrzyskie and Wielkopolskie.

INNOVATIVE ACTIVITY OF GASTRONOMIC ENTERPRISES BASED ON OWN RESEARCH

Changes in marketing communication are inextricably linked and may be the consequence of activities related to the introduction of a new product or service or a change in the production process and provision of a service in a gastronomic establishment [15, 17, 42]. Table 2 presents the scope of marketing innovative activity of the surveyed enterprises in the period 2014–2016.

Table 2. Marketing innovations implemented in the period 2014-2016 in catering enterprises (N=99)

Tabela 2. Innowacje marketingowe wdrażane w okresie 2014-2016 w przedsiębiorstwach gastronomicznych (N = 99)

Specification	Percent of answers	Period of activity on the market		Area of activity		Financial condition	
		p	V*	p	V	p	V
The changes introduced for aesthetic or other creative modifications (not technology), eg. Logo, object, environment, menu cards, etc.	43,4	0,027	0,32	0,919	ns	0,236	ns
It has implemented new ways of communicating with the client	36,4	0,184	0,23	0,310	ns	0,482	ns
Implemented new or significantly modified ways of selling or providing services (eg sales via the Internet, home delivery)	27,3	0,105	ns	0,64	ns	0,821	ns
Marketing research has been introduced to introduce a new product or service	27,3	0,104	ns	0,255	ns	0,732	ns
The concept (strategy) of the company's marketing was significantly changed	18,2	0,518	ns	0,134	ns	0,451	ns
Implemented new forms of promotional activities, new pricing strategies	17,2	0,775	ns	0,033	0,32	0,243	ns

*V – contingency coefficient V-Cramera, ns - no statistically significant relationship at $p < 0.05$

Source: The own study

Źródło: Badania własne

Among the surveyed companies from the food service sector is dominated by the use of changes of an aesthetic nature, or other non-technological, creative modifications, eg. Logo, object, environment or menu card, etc. (43% of responses). In addition, the entrepreneurs implemented new or significantly modified ways of communicating with the client as well as new forms of sales and service provision (eg sales via the Internet, delivery of meals to the home). In both cases, there is a statistically significant difference due to the duration of the company's operation on the market (Tab. 2). In both cases, there was no "line" dependence, and the largest percentage had companies operating on the market for 5 to 9 years.

An important aspect in the context of changes in the perception of the image of a catering company is the logo design, form or colour of the enterprise environment. This is one of the elements of the brand whose importance in consumer behaviour is significant [13, 23]. According to the results of studies by Kwiatkowski et al. (2017), in order to visually distinguish themselves from the competition, over 44% of the gastronomic premises of the Warsaw agglomeration made changes in the appearance, form or colour of the surroundings, by giving a more exclusive or modern appearance [22]. In addition, 26% of companies introduced changes in the appearance, form or color of the logo of the facility. The purpose of redesign is to attract new customers and deepen relationships with existing buyers of services [46].

Communication with the client is an important, integral instrument of the marketing strategy and practical implementation of the market objectives of various enterprises. It is a company's intentional activity in a competitive market environment. Due to the increasing globalization and intensifying competition in the services sector, new ways of marketing communication are becoming more and more important, which are closely related to other types of innovative activities in this area, help shape the needs of modern buyers and focus their behaviour on the gastronomic market. The essence of this innovative approach to

communication of original solutions is the process of creating a comprehensive image of new directions focused on satisfying higher-order needs, i.e. recognition and self-fulfillment of consumers. This trend is reflected, for example, in gastronomy, the concept of Food design and the offer of ethnic, molecular or Fusion cuisine [17, 18, 20, 39, 40].

As world experience shows, the basis for effective and effective marketing communication in catering services is their integration around a coherent message of the market message and the image of the entire undertaking. It consists not only of the package of services offered or the menu offer (including the type of cuisine, taste, smell, nutritional value of the dishes produced, etc.), but also the interior, its equipment and style, climate, service and, above all, the originality of the solutions and their innovativeness in relation to the new needs of clients using these services [12, 20, 39, 40].

Other marketing innovations identified in the surveyed catering enterprises were: implementation of new ways of selling or providing services or conducting marketing research to introduce new products (27%). Changes in the manner of selling or providing services in the analyzed premises usually related to sales via the Internet or delivery of dishes directly to the customer's home. More and more companies decide to operate in virtual space [14].

As a result, this market is becoming more and more competitive, its product and service offer is systematically expanding, and companies are using new technological possibilities (eg mobile applications) and communication (e-advertising, direct marketing, loyalty programs) to simplify the process shopping, increase the sense of security in conducting transactions via the Internet and, as a result, encourage customers to e-shopping [8, 27, 38]. Over the last years there has been rapid development of e-commerce, both in Poland and in the world. In 2013, the value of e-transaction amounted to PLN 26 billion, and in 2016 it is estimated at PLN 50 billion [8, 27]. Likewise, in 2016 approximately 5%

of Polish internet users were making purchases online, this number increased to 62% in 2019 [8]. It is also estimated that half of Polish online customers are so-called heavy shoppers, that is shopping on a daily basis or even a few times a day. They also spend relatively large portion of their time on preparing for various purchases by *inter alia* analyzing discounts found throughout the internet. This is facilitated by new technology such as apps which in turn grant the loyal customer special discounts and points.

It is the development of the mobile devices as well as the change of using Internet that prompted the rapid growth of e-commerce including the gastronomy sector. The use of mobile devices in the end of 2018 translated into 70% of consumer trends in both online shopping as well as regular stores. One of the key trends in Polish e-commerce in 2018 was personalization, that is possibility to create tailor-made offers and targeted marketing as well as customer experience with a certain brand. The concept of customer experience encompasses the whole shopping process starting with the first offer, choice of the right option up until fast and secure payment for the good followed by trouble-free delivery [31]. According to the report „E-commerce w Polsce. Gemius dla e-Commerce Polska”, online shopping in 2019 became easier (52%) and cheaper (44%) [8].

There are internet systems on the polish market used to sell services in gastronomy, where through the Internet, thanks to such platforms as: Just Eat, Takeaway, Pyszne.pl, Uber Eats, Gastrobooking, Quandoo, Gasatronauci.pl or Rezerwator.pl, you can order meals with delivery to the indicated place, and also to book a table or meal at a stationary location. An important element of the sales of catering services are also group shopping websites (eg Lunchroom, Groupon, Multilunch, etc.). Payment for the services provided can be made online, and special applications allow the use of loyalty programs, which is associated with the financial benefits of customers. The structure of the market is changing dynamically, as the business of ordering food online in the opinion of many analytical companies is currently the most promising service sector [19].

According to the recent report of Deloitte (2019), restaurants in London, Madrid, Paris and Warsaw can sell 1.6 mln meals weekly thanks to the food ordering platforms. These platforms

are also the reason behind the rapid growth of the gastronomy sector; companies in this sector increased their profits by 285 mln EUR and revenues by 500 mln EUR. It is estimated that if the current growth trend in this sector stays at 10%, then the European gastronomy market will be worth 25 bln dollars by 2023. Even though deliveries amount to only 2 to 5% of the total orders, the increase of the online orders is dynamic and amounts to around 20% in London, Paris and Warsaw. Deloitte's consultancy firm in fact forecasts a significant rise in popularity of the food ordering platforms and its impact on the growth of the sector as a whole. Restaurants working with Uber Eats in London, Paris, Warsaw and Madrid are already experiencing the increased sales (59-74% since they joined the platform [25].

According to the results of own research, the least catering enterprises significantly changed the marketing strategy and implemented new forms of promotional activities or new pricing strategies (Tab. 2). There is a relationship between introducing changes to the promotion or prices, and the area of the company's activity. The wider the area, the range of promotional or price tools increased. However, the largest share in these activities (over 55%) had enterprises operating on the domestic market.

According to the research carried out by Kwiatkowski et al. (2017) in 2014-2016 gastronomic companies were putting their advertisements on the online platforms and websites www. Outdoor ads were used less frequently. Moreover, pricing strategies were an innovation in the companies' marketing (loyalty programmes). Pricing strategies are usually implemented in order to stand out and attract larger group of customers to the service [22].

Most of the surveyed catering enterprises pointed to the estimated effects of introducing the above-mentioned marketing innovations. They were not very spectacular achievements, because they usually oscillated at the level of up to 30%, as presented in Tab. 3. Due to the use of new products in marketing communication, gastronomic establishments increased by 10-30%: company prestige (about 25%), product range or service (about 22%) and market shares (about 17%). It is worth noting that the survey included companies that declared the effects of introducing innovative activities in the area of marketing at the level above 30% or even 50%.

Table 3. The effects of marketing innovations introduced in catering enterprises in the period 2014-2016 (N = 99)

Tabela 3. Efekty wprowadzanych innowacji marketingowych w przedsiębiorstwach gastronomicznych w okresie 2014-2016 (N=99)

	The level of effects					Period of activity on the market		Area of activity		Financial condition	
	NC	to 10%	10-30%	30-50%	>50	p	V**	p	V	p	V
	in %										
1. Increasing the range of products / services	16,2	15,2	22,2	11,1	8,1	0,167	ns	0,224	ns	0,018	0,34
2. Opening new markets	30,3	12,1	12,1	15,2	2,0	0,206	ns	0,039	0,33	0,029	0,33
3. Increasing market share	22,2	14,1	17,2	14,1	5,1	0,530	ns	0,072	ns	0,481	ns
4. Increasing the company's prestige	21,2	10,1	25,3	8,1	7,1	0,073	ns	0,04	0,37	0,79	ns
5. Increased competitiveness on the market	20,2	18,2	14,1	12,1	8,1	0,649	ns	0,013	0,32	0,956	ns

*NC -no change; ** V-Cramer's contingency coefficient; ns - no statistically significant relationship at $p < 0.05$

Source: The own study

Źródło: Badania własne

According to the statistical analysis, there is a relationship between the area of basic business activity and the opening of new markets or increase of shares on the existing market and increasing prestige and competitiveness (Tab. 3). This effect (usually at the level of 10 - 30%) was noticeable primarily in companies operating on local market (within the city or poviát). The better the financial condition of the catering establishment, the more often the impact of introducing marketing innovation on the increase of the range of products and services on offer (gluten at 10-30%) was declared. The high number of indications in terms of increasing the assortment, prestige and market share indicates that the innovative activity of the surveyed enterprises concerns the implementation of improvements and actions aimed at satisfying the widest possible range of clients.

The results of our own research confirm previous scientific reports on the impact of increased innovative activity of enterprises on making the assortment more attractive, in order to better meet customer needs, strengthen market position or create new sales markets, which results in increased competitiveness of enterprises. Achieving competitive effects over a long period of time requires high marketing efficiency and continuous expansion of the technological base [1, 42, 44].

CONCLUSIONS

Among the marketing tools in the gastronomic premises, the aesthetics were changed most frequently, or modifications were made to the object, logo, surroundings, dishes or menu cards. Entrepreneurs also implemented new or significantly changed ways of communication with the client, including methods of selling and providing services (eg online sales, delivery of meals to the home) or conducting marketing research to introduce new products. These activities were aimed at satisfying the needs of the widest possible group of clients.

Least catering enterprises has significantly changed the marketing strategy and implement new forms of promotional activities and new pricing strategies. The wider area of activity

in the market this range of promotional tools (eg company advertising on portals and web services), or the price increase.

Marketing innovations are an important channel for the exchange of information and opinions, often decisive for the perception of the brand and having a significant impact on the final choice of place of food, and thus the way of nutrition and ultimately consumer health. Thanks to the use of new products in marketing communication, the analyzed gastronomic premises increased (up to 30%) the prestige of the company, the range of product or service offer and market shares. These were usually smaller companies operating on the local market.

WNIOSKI

Spośród narzędzi marketingowych w lokalach gastronomicznych najczęściej zmieniano estetykę lub wprowadzono modyfikacje: obiektu, logo, otoczenia, potraw czy karty menu. Przedsiębiorcy wdrażali też nowe lub istotnie zmienione sposoby komunikacji z klientem, w tym również metody sprzedaży i świadczenia usług (tj. sprzedaż online, dostawa posiłków do domu) czy prowadzenie badań marketingowych w celu wprowadzenia nowości. Działania te miały na celu zaspakajając potrzeby jak najszerszej grupy klientów.

Najmniej przedsiębiorstw gastronomicznych istotnie zmieniło strategię marketingową i wdrożyło nowe formy działań promocyjnych czy nowe strategie cenowe. Im szerszy obszar działania na rynku tym zakres narzędzi promocyjnych (reklamy firmy na portalach i serwisach www), czy cenowych się zwiększał.

Innowacje marketingowe stanowią istotny kanał wymiany informacji i opinii, często decydujący o postrzeganiu marki oraz posiadający znaczny wpływ na ostateczny wybór miejsca wyżywienia, a tym samym sposobu żywienia i ostatecznie zdrowia konsumenta. Dzięki zastosowaniu nowości w komunikacji marketingowej badane lokale gastronomiczne zwiększały (na poziomie do 30%) prestiż firmy, asortyment oferty produktowej lub usługowej oraz udziały w rynku. Były to najczęściej mniejsze firmy działające na rynku lokalnym.

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