

## **CONFUSING BORDERS BETWEEN MARKETING AND REALITY**

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**Abstract:** : The company sees its clients from a strategic point of view, approaching them as human beings and paying attention to their needs and preoccupations. The current marketers try to reach the mind and heart of the consumers. Most of them, the consumers seek for solutions to their anxieties on a globalised market. In a confusing world, they look for those companies that address to the most profound human wishes from a social, economic and environmental point of view in their mission, vision and values. They not only seek for functional and emotional satisfaction, but also the human spirit fulfilment throughout the chosen products and services. From another point of view, it is difficult to determine where the marketing creations stop and where “the real world” begins. We can not be sure of the beginning and the end of this border.

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**Key words: marketing; consumer’s needs, global market**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

To what extend the popular culture and the perception that the consumer has upon the reality are created by marketing efforts? The perceptive marketing field permits a global satisfaction of the client. Sensorial branding has as main goal the stimulation of the consumer-brand relationship. The consumers focus on some stimuli, while others can not perceive them and ignore some messages. Can the human beings behaviour be influenced by exposing them to images that they can not perceive, because they are presented too fast to be seen? Does the subliminal perception works? Is the persuasion unethical?

### **2. OBJECTIVES**

Semiology permits the decodification of the consumer behaviour, because the consumers use the products to express their social identity. One of the modern publicity forces is that to create an universe named “hyper-reality”, in which what is a simple representation at the beginning becomes a reality. The advertising creates new relationships between objects and persons, inventing connections between products and their advantages.

In a hyper-real medium, the connection between symbol and reality is weaker. The artificial associations between product, symbols and real world often regain a life. The management of the impression is an extremely difused phenomenon, referring to the strategic management behaviour of the own image in the others' eyes. The products offer to a consumer a social status that helps him find an answer to the question: Who am I at present?

Nowadays we don't know whom to trust. One of five TV spots make use of a celebrity and about 10% (one billion dollars annually) of the entire advertising expenses are given to these celebrities. We can strongly state that we are living in a celebocracy. The perception of oneself leads the consumption practices, even more when the person tries to obey the rules of the society regarding its behaviour or aparency. The publicity tries to modify the expectences regarding the products, stimulating the positive fellings with oneself.

It is possible that a company is humancentric and, at the same time, remains profitable? The companies that respect a code of honour are awarded. The business ethics is build upon behaviour rules that lead the market actions. The consumers understand that the companies work as engines of socio-cultural progress. In a growing number they judge the companies upon the degree that they are addicted to solve some social and public problems. On the mature markets, the emotional and physical health represents an extremely important social theme, approached by many companies. Sometimes, the worst enemy of the consumer is the consumer himself.

### **3. MARKETING AND SOCIAL RESPONSABILITY**

We need the respect, gratitude and esteem of the others. The humans need humans and they feel loyal to humans: we want products and services from humans, not from the machines. The loyalty doesn't come from Marketing, but from ourselves and personal sacrifices.

The values govern the actions and our personality. They cover and direct our important decisions. Similarly, the knowledge and understanding of the business values confer to a company the capacity to control in a durable way its future. The human beings have autonomus powers to add values to the world. Within this context, our moral mission is to cultivate the understanding throughwhich we will make a better world. We thus consider that the moral initiative throughout business needs an equilibrium between the practical and moral considerations. (Ionescu Gh., 2006)

The companies have transactions on the market, confronting themselves with two dichotomous situations: their mission and actions are put on the community, their own employees and the environment or, they chose to betray their trust. The Institute of the Reputation and the Harris Interactive Organisation make a survey regarding the companies that deserve the admiration of the others. ([www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com)) Every culture, because of its own values and believes differently defines the ethic behaviours. For instance, it can be moral for some managers to increase the profitability by exploiting the children work or making transactions with eggs that have nothing in common with the hen.

The problem of the social responsibility is inerent in the society of the organizations. The modern company has an important social power to decide regarding the human beings: who to hire, who to fire and who to promote. It needs power to establish rules and discipline to obtain the results. The nonprofit organizations have a bigger power than the companies. The refuse for a student admission can be understood

as a way to forebiden him from a professional life. On the other hand, a unprepared student – a future specialist can become a burden for the employee and the national economy. Why are there students that have a job with no calification? Why do the Romanian students migrate abroad after graduation?

Milton Friedman, Nobel Prize laureate, affirmed that a company has one responsibility: the economic efficiency. We agree to this fact, judging that a company with a profit at least equal with its cost of capital is not responsible from a social point of view. It wastes the society's resources. (Drucker P., 1998)

#### **4. DOES MARKETING PROMISES MIRACLES?**

One of the most current acusations to the marketing field is that the companies convinces the consumers of the fact that they need some material goods and they will be seen as inferiours if they do not own them. Thus, we can put the following question: who controls the market: the company or the consumer? Dailly we have new ways to buy, use and own products and services. The old times of "the marketing as a king", when the companies decided upon what the consumers should know or do, have forever set. The consumers still need companies but in a different way and under their own conditions.

Most of us still believe that the marketing arbitrarily links the products to some social attributes, what generates a material society in which we are judged by what we own. For instance, the "X beer" should comfort us, fulfill our need of thirsty and induce the belief that, drinking that beer, we are the ones that make the boss laugh. Similarly, a clothing washing machine should be perceived as being useful to wash our cloths and not as a proof of envy or praise.

The publicity makes the consumers believe that the products have magical powers so as to transform their lives. They will succeed in life and will not be touched by any troubles. From this point of view, the publicity works as the mythology in the primitive society, meaning simple answers to complex problems. In reality, the advertisers don't know the people well enough so as to manipulate them. It is well known that the failure rate of the new products is somewhere between 40-80% for consuming products. The people believe that the advertisers own scientific techniques to manipulate them.

The publicity transmits information about the social meaning of the consumption of a product and how this product can serve the psychological and physical needs of the consumer. For instance, an automobile with a large trunk can be more valuable than that with no such characteristic. However, the toothpaste type used by a person will not affect the way that she is seen by the society. The theory of conviction proposed by George A. Akerlof (2009) indicates the fact that "(...) human beings have needs and preferences and buy goods to satisfy them. One of these needs and preferences are subtile and obscure; it is difficult to say when they are fulfilled (...)". The commercials offer us an exterior justification to believe the same thing. People like to think that they are attractive and intelligent.

Many companies reconsider their businesses, approaching a new market, such as the ecological products market. A study made reveals that, despite the economic crisis, 44% of the consumers still continue to buy ecological products. About 35% of the consumers declared that their interest in such products grew after the crisis. 80% of the consumers are influenced by brands that are social responsible and 18% of them are willing to pay more for these.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Despite all the efforts made by the researchers, the consumer's worst enemy is himself. He is often described as rational decident that tries to chose products and services that are good for his health, personal wealth, his family and society. In reality, the consumption desires, choices and actions have negative consequences upon the others and the society they live in. Within the harmful behavior, the excess of alcohol and tobacco consumption supports the social pressions and the social value of the money leads to stealing and fraude. The confrontation with beauty ideals and inaccessible success can cause frustrations of oneself.

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