

THE ROLE AND INVOLVEMENT OF INFLUENCERS IN PROMOTING BRANDS

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Abstract: The aim of this article is to analyse the impact that traditional advertising and online advertising have on consumers, in the context of permanent evolution that requires improved marketing strategies and better targeting. The research methodology consists of a critical literature review on branding and influencers, aiming to highlight the impact of influencers on different generations of consumers. The conclusion of our research is that brands must always come up with something new, adapt to trends and behavioural changes, and this adaptation is facilitated by influencers, who place the product or service in the right context because they are aware of changes in the online environment, acting as promoters of change, which leads to greater receptivity on the side of consumers.

JEL classification: M15, M31, M37, M41, M42

Key words: Branding, Traditional advertising, Online advertising, Influencer, Digital marketing, Influencers Marketing, Personal branding, Consumer behaviour, Generation X, Generation Y - Millennials, Generation Z, Generation Alpha

1. INTRODUCTION

The brand is an "automatic, strong and persistent association of a product or service with all the associated attributes offered by a company, and a unique concept or experience in the minds of its customers" (Kotler, 2000, p. 454). That is why the purpose of a brand is to differentiate between products of the same type but also to create the promise of a certain value.

Brands receive complex personality, so the relationship between the symbol and the object appears inverted, with the symbol absorbing more reality than the object, making the shift from brand image to brand culture (Ballantyne and Aitken, 2007, p. 366).

To reach the target audience, brands use both traditional advertising and online advertising.

Traditional advertising implies communication through TV ads, radio ads, presentation catalogues, flyers and other prints as well as street billboards. It is form of mass communication and the information reaches more people at the same time, its effect being cumulated and delivered over time. This type of communication is limited because it is unidirectional and is only done from brand to consumer.

On the other side of the spectrum lies online marketing, which involves social networks, web pages, blogs, video blogs, banners. The messages being delivered are personalized and addressed to the client as an individual, trying to

meet a certain need. The communication is bidirectional, both from brand to consumer and from consumer to brand, and the effect is immediate.

2. OBJECTIVES

Through our research we aim to find the answer to the following question:
What is the role of influencers in promoting brands?

The first part of our article is dedicated to the analysis of advertising receptivity of the different generations of consumers. We then continue by showcasing the relationship between brand-advertising and influencers, ending with recommendations.

3. ANALYSES

3.1. RECEPTIVITY TO ADVERTISING OF GENERATIONS OF CONSUMERS

Given that consumer behaviour has changed, the new generation of consumers places great value on the experience that other consumers have had with the desired product or service. In this case, the impulse to buy is created by online influencers, as millennial generations are reluctant to traditional advertising and perceive influencers as experts in the areas in which they operate (Burlea Schiopoiu and Bernardon, 2015).

The period they were born, the way they were raised and educated, the degree of access to technology, are factors that categorise individuals into the following generations: Generation X, Generation Y (Millennials), Generation Z and Generation Alpha (Tocilă, 2015, blog). Marketers must take account of the characteristics of each generation when addressing a segment, in order to achieve the desired results.

Generation X is made up of people born between 1966 and 1976, who are now between 42 and 52 years old. They are the youth of the Revolution, who grew up in communism. This is the generation that has faced the greatest changes in habits and mentality.

Generation Y, Echo Boomers or Millennials are those born between 1977-1994, now aged between 24 and 41. The youngsters of this generation are sophisticated, technology-oriented and immune to most marketing and sales techniques. They are creative, goal oriented, they have increased self-confidence, developed hobbies and grew up under their parents' watch. They adapt quickly to changes around them, both in terms of mentality and of context. They represent a challenge for marketers and yet the most sought after segment of the population. They are united as a generation and eager to make their voice heard. They are also the ones who invented the Internet as we currently know it: Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Netflix.

Generation Z (is made up of those born in the period 1995-2011) is aged between 7 and 23. These young people are exposed to a high level of technology that will generate diverse opportunities and personalized education. They are much more flexible than young people of Generation Y, being the first to be born in a digitalised environment and grow up online. Generation Z looks for independence and personalization, unlike Generation Y that seeks mentoring and impeccable service. When addressing them, brands must switch from "digital adaptation" to

"digital native". Sparks & Honey state that 60% of them want to change the world, compared to only 38% of Millennials. They are the ones who invented vlogs and are Snapchat consumers. They are more individualistic compared to Millennials who have focused on collaboration, which is why Facebook does not appeal to them anymore, as they do not get much interest in what other representatives of their generation are doing. They prefer WhatsApp and Snapchat, where they can keep their groups small and long-term. They are masters of Internet searches, reviews and prefer subtle, honest, perfectly integrated, useful and non-aggressive advertising. Excessive branding alienate them because they define themselves by building their own brand. If Millennials have opened the way for the brand-story, Generation Z is the one that will upgrade it to an art, since brands that have a well-defined purpose and story take precedence for them. If the story is told by an online influencer who managed to gain their trust, then the brand wins them over.

Generation Alpha emerged in 2012 and is bound to last about 14-15 years, consisting of children up to the age of 6. This generation will be the most educated in history, having a tendency towards materialism, but being tech natives. They grew up with smart devices at hand, being connected non-stop to the Internet. For them technology is not only a tool but an integral part of their existence, and they are the ones who will really change the world.

Table no 1. Generations of costumers

Generation	Timeline	Advertising
Generation X	1966-1976	TV commercials, radio, newspapers
Generation Y (Milleenials)	1977-1994	Facebook, Twitter, blogs, Netflix
Generation Z	1995-2011	WhatsApp, Snapchat
Generation Alpha	2012-2026	will revolutionize advertising

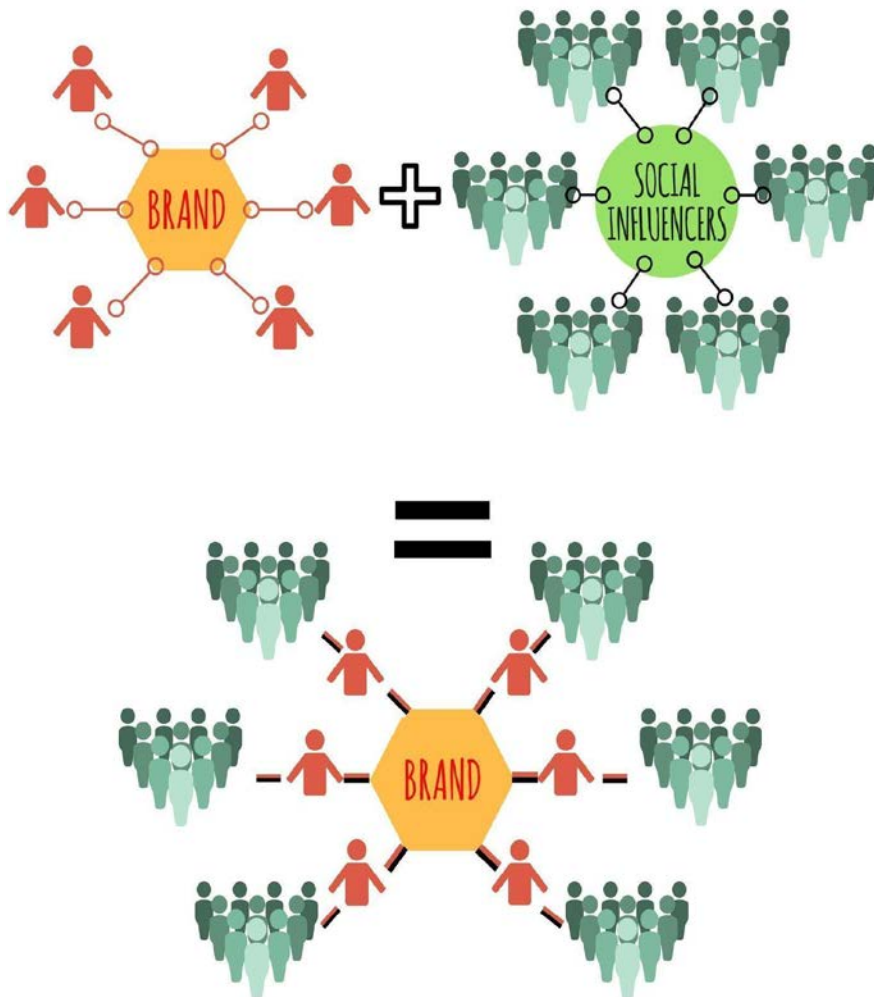
Source: Author

The biggest challenge for brands is to adapt to the specifics of each generation in order to gain their attention and turn them into brand ambassadors who consume, talk about brands and have values aligned with brand values. Brands have come to the conclusion that in order to reach the new generations of consumers more easily they need the help of important online people whose opinion is taken into account by their followers, people who act as influencers.

An influencer is a person or brand that has the power to change or influence purchasing decisions or behaviours of a group of followers as a result of sharing one's own consumer experiences.

Influencers deliver the message of brands they trust, they collaborate with or they have been positively affected by, to the general public. They earn their credibility through their honesty and transparency they demonstrate to the community they have created around them. For the community of followers, the influencer becomes an authority, a reference, a source of inspiration, someone whose recommendations they trust.

Creating brand awareness means making a brand visible and easy to recognize, and advertising is presented as the art of creating awareness in a consumer's mind about a business or brand. Under the current conditions, brands are increasingly turning to influencers to increase brand awareness.



Source: personal contribution

Figure no 1.1. The role of influencers in delivering brand message

Once identified, the products and services deliver a quality guarantee. A brand requires identity, but it only becomes a brand after it has been exposed, communicated and recognized. Beyond providing identification and differentiation, the brand is a promise. Thus, a brand is born to deliver a promise, an existing and unfulfilled need, and a mission.

The brand is where a product, service or company is seen by the consumer, so that it covers all the attributes that are reflected in the mind of the consumer,

making him recognize and choose a particular product or service instead of another. Branding involves creating an extraordinary user experience, it has to create interaction. Without a close bond with the user, without interaction and experience we cannot talk about a brand.

All intangible resources comprising the brand must be permanently developed, in order to create a positive image for the consumer (Burlea Schiopoiu and Remme, 2017). All this is possible to the extent that brand features are built on reputation, trust, loyalty and recognition among customers, which turn make the brand more than just a symbol, brand or design. It is the identity of the brand that provides the customer with safety, and we may state that the brand gives people the measure of things, it is an indicator that reflects their level of expectation and ensures that promises will be kept.

All brand growth, sustenance, and image maintenance, all of which yield consequences on purchasing decisions, should materialize in a well-defined brand strategy and focus on both online advertising and traditional advertising.

Traditional advertising is represented by press, radio, TV, street billboards, billboards, in addition to flyers, posters, business cards, brochures, folders and other prints needed for a business to promote itself.

Traditional advertising takes the form of a monologue; consumers have no way of responding to messages received from brands.

Among the most widely used and largest forms of traditional advertising are street billboards, often located on roads and highways, to inform drivers about the products and services promoted through them. Messages should be as short, concise and visible as possible to get the most impact. It is very important that the panels are located in areas where there is a lot of traffic or in proximity of companies' premises, to ignite the curiosity and interest of those looking at them. Street billboards instantly draw attention through colours and design, but compete with other outdoor means such as luminous signs or traffic signs. They can be challenged as a polluting factor, which can give rise to conflicts and controversies.

The radio has the advantage of transmitting large-scale messages to a large number of people, but most of the time listening to the radio takes place in traffic or at home, while people are busy doing other things and so they are not paying much attention to messages sent on radio, being distracted by all sorts of other activities or people.

The press, including newspapers, magazines, and reviews, provides information covering a wide range of interests. The originality and profile of a publication determines the contents and sales figures. Among the advantages of the written press is the speed at which information can be distributed, as well as the wide area of broadcasting, which implies a broad and geographically dispersed audience. The cost of printing and distribution is relatively low. The written press offers the possibility of carefully reviewing the message, providing many details, but if a material is superficially browsed through, the message may not have the desired impact. Another very important aspect is that the prestige of a newspaper or magazine influences the way a certain product is received by the public. One of the most important drawbacks lies in grouping all ads on the same page, which does not allow personalization and clear positioning in the mind of the reader.

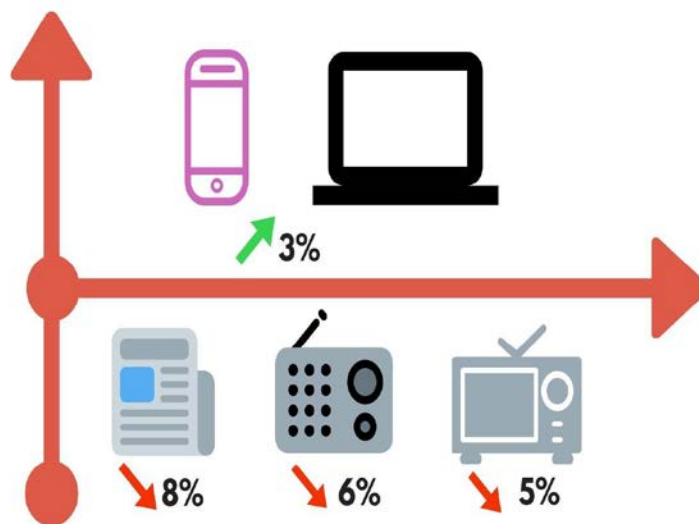
Television has the big advantage of exposure to a very large audience during prime time or certain programs. The prestige of a television increases the impact of an advertisement, and the atmosphere in which the message is transmitted is very relaxed, which generates a positive effect. It can also have drawbacks like distraction by other activities, lack of attention, switching channels during commercials. Dissemination of advertisements during prime time or on popular TV stations is extremely expensive.

Cinematography has the lowest audience in terms of number of people reached, which is steadily decreasing. It has the advantage that the audience is present there out of their own will, which ensures their attention, the commercials being broadcast in a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere. They are mainly targeted at young people because they are the loyal customers of cinemas, which is a plus for the brands that address this segment, yet they have very high broadcasting costs.

Traditional advertising has the main disadvantage that it cannot quantify the impact of messages or the number of people it has been exposed to, due to unidirectional communication and lack of continuity.

New Media has transformed the average, malleable consumer into an informed one, who cannot be as easily convinced by different ads in newspapers or commercials, being bored with traditional approaches, a consumer who wants to be truly impressed when exposed to an advertising message.

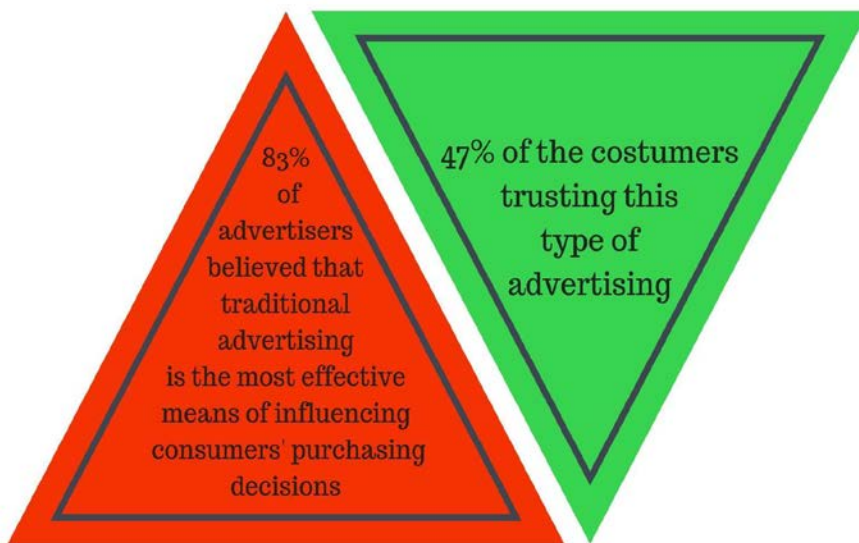
In 2015, in the United Kingdom, Nielsen Company conducted a study on "Global trust in Advertising and Brand Messages" and concluded that trust in traditional advertising is declining as follows: confidence in editorials dropped by 8%, confidence in radio and newspaper ads has dropped by 6%, billboards and TV commercials have fallen by 5%, while online and mobile ads have seen a 3% increase in consumer trust. One very important aspect is that personal recommendations and online opinions are at the top of the trust scale. (nielsen.com)



Source: personal contribution

Figure no. 2 - Trust in Advertising

A study by Experticity, the largest network of experts in influential brands, reflects the rupture between advertisers and the consumers they want to influence. Although 83% of advertisers believed that traditional advertising is the most effective means of influencing consumers' purchasing decisions, it was among the last sources of trust mentioned by consumers, with only 47% of them trusting this type of advertising. At the peak of their trust, most consumers have ranked reviews or online recommendations, recommendations from friends or experts in the field they were asked about. The new generation of consumers greatly value the experience of other consumers with the product or service they are interested in.



Source: personal contribution

Figure no. 3 - The rupture between advertisers and the consumers they want to influence

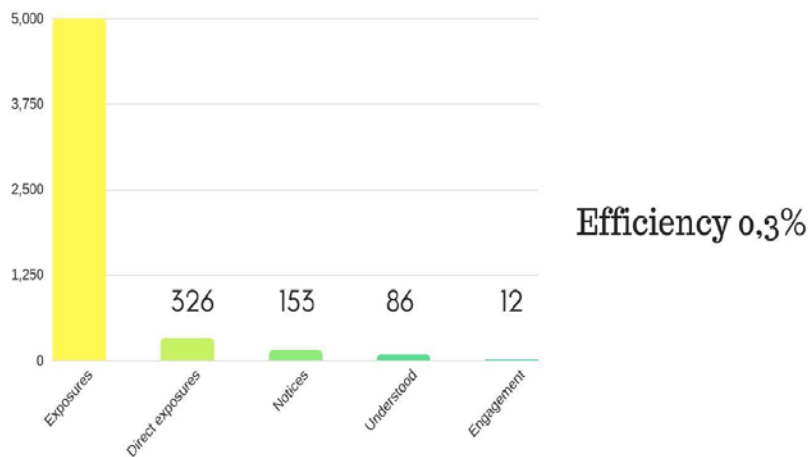
Young generations of Millennials, tomorrow's consumers, do not like traditional advertising and want a much more personal relationship with the brand, an experience that adapts to their personality and individual taste.

The most important aspect that advertisers must take into account when promoting a product or service is consumer confidence, and the biggest problem they face in traditional advertising lies in the fact that they fail to integrate consumer identity and give them a voice. For this reason, traditional advertising fades in comparison to online advertising that is consumer-centred, interactive and allows for engagement and real-time feedback.

In the attempt to be everywhere, traditional advertising leads brands to the other extreme, which dilutes the effects of visibility and notoriety as the consumer is bombarded with all kinds of messages and not only becomes reticent, but also indifferent, building up to the point when he is annoyed by posters and advertisements of products and services that he is not interested in or does not need. All this alienates the brand consumer as the message is sent to a wide audience without clear segmentation, without precise targeting to the target audience, having

a more general character. The lack of personal character in traditional advertising leads to brand failure in establishing a solid link with the individual because it treats him as a simple consumer in the mass it addresses.

Media Dynamics Inc. conducted a study in 2014 that highlights the oversaturation of advertisements in traditional advertising by brands that aim to cover all empty spaces with a logo or advert. According to the study, an urban individual who 30 years ago was exposed to 500 brand messages per day is currently exposed to 5000 such messages. Of the 5000 exposures, 326 are direct exposures, 153 are noticed, 86 are consciously understood, and only 12 exposures manage to truly create an impression and engagement on the part of the consumer. Thus, there are a number of brand messages that are being disseminated to a large audience, with an efficiency of only 0.30%. (mediadynamics.com)



Source: personal contribution

Figure no. 4 - The impact of exposures

Online advertising is the result of the need to adapt to an audience eager to create their own viewing experience when they access the Internet, individually choosing when, how, and how much media content to consume. Advertisers have had to rethink the entire ad creation process of their ads, as well as the way they sell them, in response to an increasing segment of their audience who want to be heard and listened to, and who is looking for a more interactive, bi-directional relationship with the brand, being no longer impressed by the same banal and repetitive advertisements, lacking personality.

Increasing the amount of information available online has increased the amount of time spent on the web, which has generated a new market for brands to promote their products and services.

Through online advertising, the brand is trying to get acquainted with the buyers, to recognize their needs and expectations with regard to the products and

services they want to acquire, and to restore the link between brand and consumer, a long-lost connection during traditional advertising.

Online advertising, also known as online marketing, digital marketing, or Internet marketing, conveys promotional messages to consumers combining marketing and advertising tactics and using the Internet as communications medium. This type of advertising includes e-mail advertising, search engine marketing, social media advertising, display advertising (banners, videos, animations) and mobile advertising. Expenditures on online advertising are significantly lower than on traditional advertising.

Banners are the most widely used means of advertising on the Internet, already existing before the search engines emerged, whose concept consists of buying advertising space on a website to display an image that is as relevant as possible for the brand's target audience. The websites on which banners are displayed are chosen based on an algorithm which uses cookies as well as the user's search history to build the consumer's profile with an aim of displaying ads based on his or her sphere of interest. These ads are meant to send traffic to a particular site or create awareness for a particular brand. Banners are compatible with most sites and have low costs. They are presented in the form of flash, .gif or .jpg, have variable sizes, and can be positioned anywhere on the web page, in the header or footer of the page, or on the side.

Another way of online advertising is "search engine advertising", which consists of promoting certain websites by optimizing search engines to increase their visibility and traffic based on the links that appear in a user's top searches, aiming to redirect users to the parent site.

Promotional offers sent by e-mail and newsletters are used quite often in the online environment, but their success depends on how users can set their mailbox filters. Given that most messages are unsolicited, users avoid opening them.

Google, the world's most popular search engine, offers its own type of online advertising, namely "Google Search Ads" or "AdWords Ads", which consists of a series of ads inserted among the results of a keyword search entered by the user. These ads are PPC (pay per click), meaning advertisers pay for each click on their ad, knowing exactly how many visits their ad produces.

As a result of the development of video content and the increased number of video sharing sites, where users can watch their favourite shows and series, ads have appeared in the video or throughout the video through certain pop-ads. With the increasing awareness of video sharing and streaming sites such as Netflix, Youtube or Vimeo, ads have become very popular and effective, but have also started to be irritating to the consumer, disturbing the viewing experience, and so the majority operate the SkipAd button.

Advertising on Social Media platforms has an important place since almost everyone owns a social media platform such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Tumblr, and the diversity of Social Media users ensures that the ad will always have a public to address.

Mobile advertising increasingly gains ground in the eyes of advertisers, as it is much harder to block ad content on mobile by installing AdBlock filters compared to desktop or laptop. According to a study released in March 2016, 65% of digital media was consumed on mobile devices (Diana Goovaerts, 65% of Digital

Media Consumed on Mobile, March 31, 2016). Currently, the percentage has risen to 76%.

This is a good enough reason for advertisers to focus on integrated mobile ads.

3.2. CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR?

The driving force behind moving from traditional to media advertising is the development and advancement of technology over the last decade, which has led to an increase in the number of channels and alternatives where a consumer can get informed, consume the media and have access to entertainment. The new media consumer is harder to target, to impress and to please.

The online space offers consumers both the opportunity and the tools to achieve brand-consumer interaction.

Consumer behaviour appears as an "interaction of impression and perception, conduct and common natural occurrences through which human beings direct the changes happening in their lives." (American Marketing Association). Consumer behaviour is a complex system of self-expression, attitudes, motivations and decisions (Burlea Schiopoiu, 2008). The development of individuality is observed through preferences, dislikes, values, and beliefs, so marketers have to focus their attention on consumer behaviour in order to understand how consumers react to various stimuli in order to channel their promotional efforts to winning over the largest segment of their audience, by gaining their trust and increasing their interest in the brand.

The evolution of consumer generations over time determines brands to constantly monitor customers so as to have a true, accurate perception of their consumer behaviour to adapt their promotion strategies. Blythe, in *Consumer Behaviour*, argues that the interactions elicited by consumer behaviour require in-depth knowledge of consumers' perceptions - what their beliefs and impressions are - what their feelings and conduct are - what they do, as well as knowledge of places and things that influence them (Blythe, 1998, p. 11).

According to Pride and Ferell's consumer behaviour studies, the ways in which a consumer responds to stimuli can be divided into 4 types of behaviour (Pride, 1991):

1. Routine response behaviours - a behaviour frequently performed by the consumer in the purchase of day-to-day and low-cost items, for which they do not spend too much time or effort in selecting a brand or product;

2. Limited decision making - in the case of an occasional product for which a moderate time is allocated for searching and decision making;

3. Extensive decision making- when purchasing expensive products for which the decision is complex and involves assessing all possible alternatives based on several criteria, which requires a long time;

4. Impulse buying - is determined by a strong stimulus to buy something immediately. Although it often causes emotional conflicts, this type of behaviour is dominant for most consumers.

Individual lifestyle lies at the core of consumer behaviour, largely explaining its variability, which in turn influences marketing strategies that need to

adapt to consumers' style and preferences, which are constantly evolving (Burlea Schiopoiu, 2014).

Starting with Generations X and Y (Millennials) and continuing with Generation Z, the behaviour of advertising consumption has undergone significant changes. The impact of a TV commercial is declining, and it is no longer a guarantee of brand credibility, as it was 50 years ago. Nowadays, building a brand requires diversifying both channels and tactics.

3.3. HOW DO BRANDS SUCCEED IN CAPTURING THE ATTENTION OF DIFFERENT GENERATIONS?

Kantar Millward Brown conducted the study: " AdReaction: How do we capture the interests of Generations X, Y and Z?", which surveyed over 23,000 consumers from 39 countries and analysed their overall media consumption patterns together with ads-related attitudes and responses to different creative approaches.

According to this study, members of Generation Z attract the attention of brands, as they account for 2 billion people worldwide and channel their promotion efforts to win over this segment. Compared with the Millennials Generation, members of Generation Z are more passionate about music (43% of them appreciate permanent access to music, compared to 30% of the Millennials Generation) and are also better acquainted with the digital environment. In order to capture their attention, brands should focus on online ads integrated into various mobile apps as well as videos on Youtube. However, youngsters of Generation Z are difficult to attract because they avoid commercials, interrupting them on average 3 seconds faster than those in Generation X.

That being said, Duncan Southgate, Global Brand Director, Media & Digital at Kantar Millward Brown Company reached the conclusion that "Generation Z grew up in a world of limitless possibilities, where they can have everything on demand, and this influences their advertising expectations. They are much more attracted by the ads that allow them to participate in creating or influencing the course of action, compared to generations Y or X, who prefer ads that help them find more information about the brand."

The question that arises is which actions brands should undertake to attract the attention of young people in Generation Z. Several directions have emerged that guide marketers in the creation of promotion strategies:

- Traditional media channels should not be ignored: although Generation Z uses digital channels in particular, it can still be impressed by traditional channels. If 75% of Generation X spend one hour a day on TV, among Generation Z this percentage is only 54% while it has a favourable stance on outdoor advertising. I noticed a rather interesting fact, namely that both Generation Z and Generation Y are photographing billboards that capture their attention and post them in their online groups to comment on them together with their entire community. It seems that in this case, photography is the link between traditional and online advertising, turning it into a bearer of the brand message, but most of the time this action is taken to stigmatize the way in which the ad was made and to highlight the brand's failure in this direction.

- Respect the online space: although youngsters in Generation Z have a more favourable attitude than those of other generations towards rewarded and skippable video ads (ads that run automatically but that can be avoided), they are

very reluctant to and critical of non-skippable ones, which have an invasive format (ads that run automatically before clips but cannot be avoided).

- Creative approach makes all the difference: humour, music and influencers they see online make youth in Generation Z more receptive to commercials. Ads that allow them a point of view or show them what happens after they make a decision have the biggest impact on them, so they are gained over by the brands that allow them to vote what happens afterwards (31% versus 25% of Generation Y), to choose an option (28% compared to 25%) or make decisions (27% compared to 22%).

- The importance of design: Generation Z pays a lot of attention to design and will evaluate the aesthetics of an ad, having an affinity for the integration of captivating forms such as Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality. Innovations and filters used in advertisements are much more appreciated by Generation Z than by other generations.

- Presence on social media platforms: Generation Z is quite present on social media such as Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat. Globally, 36% of young people in Generation Z access Instagram several times a day, 24% accessing Snapchat equally frequently. Among generation Y, the percentages recorded for Instagram and Snapchat are 21% and 10% respectively, and for Generation X, 9% and 4%, respectively.

- Not to use the same approach all the way: since Generation Z is not homogeneous, brands have to differentiate their ads according to the specifics of the area and to the culture that young people are part of.

The same study highlighted the following:

- Generation Z is spending the most time on mobile devices, with 74% of young people spending more than one hour a day on their mobile, compared with 66% of Generation Y and 55% of Generation X.

- Consumption of radio, TV and newspapers or magazines has dropped, with 51% of young people in Generation Z spending more than one hour a day on TV, compared to their counterparts in Generation Y (59%), and Generation X (74%).

- Young people in Generation Z are more passionate about music and movies, which leads to improved user receptivity to integrated advertisements, with 39% of users claiming that music makes them more responsive to commercials and 38% of them claiming that movies have the same effect, compared to 29% and 28%, respectively for Generation X.

- Short videos are preferred by all generations, but Generation X has a distinct propensity for increasingly shorter clips of up to 10 seconds, compared to Generation X that also tolerates 20-second clips.

- Compared to other generations, there are several representatives of Generation Z who have installed Adblock desktop software (31% vs. 30% in Y generation and 22% in Generation X). By comparison, the rates of installing Adblock mobile apps point to 13%, 14%, and 12%, respectively.

As far as reviews from other users are concerned, as well as the use of social media platforms to gain information about a certain brand, members of

Generation Y have much greater openness than other generations, while Generation X prefers to receive information directly from the brand.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The big challenge for brands is to succeed in attracting customer attention and delivering the message relying on creativity in an increasingly short time, given that Facebook has 1.7 seconds to capture users' attention if they are connected on mobile devices and 2.5 seconds if they are connected from their desktop, while also creating engagement.

To achieve this, brands resort to Influencer Marketing, which aims to generate action within a community that trusts the opinion of a person with expertise, popularity and reputation in their field of interest. Very interesting is the fact that these communities naturally develop in the online environment, people gathering around a common value or ideas they believe in, around a passion they share.

The year 2018 is the year when brands refine how they deliver online advertising to consumers, under the restrictions imposed by GDPR and seeking to combat adblocking through creative and strategic solutions.

The evolution of consumer generations over time determines brands to constantly monitor customers so they can have a real, accurate perception of their consumer behaviour, in order to adapt their promotion strategies. Interactions determined by consumer behaviour require knowledge of consumers' perceptions - what they believe, their impressions - what they feel, and their conduct - what they do, as well as knowing the places and things that influence them.

New Media has transformed the average, malleable consumer into an informed one, who cannot be as easily convinced by different ads in newspapers or commercials, being bored with traditional approaches, a consumer who wants to be truly impressed when exposed to an advertising message.

The driving force behind moving from traditional to media advertising is the development and advancement of technology over the last decade, which has led to an increase in the number of channels and alternatives where a consumer can get informed, consume media and access entertainment. The new media consumer is harder to target, to impress and to please.

Consumers want to be heard, and the online space offers them this opportunity, as well as the tools needed to achieve brand-consumer interaction.

Given that Social Media and the Internet occupy an extremely important place in people's everyday concerns and routine, be it at home, at work, at school or on the street, their attention to traditional advertising is rather low. Brands and advertisers need to focus on interacting with consumers, knowing where to find them, and making their way there before them, getting to know them, giving them the opportunity to be heard, to voice their dislikes, and take advantage of their feedback in order to adapt their ads to their needs and expectations, be it via a blog post, an Instagram image, or a video on Youtube. Thus, the interest of brands should be directed towards social media and to the power of influencers that can stimulate the interest of communities and influence their purchasing decisions by recommendations which they trust.

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