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CHALLENGES OF NAVIGATING BRANDS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA – MARKETING MANAGERS POINT OF VIEW

Creating and maintaining a successful brand has always been a long-term activity that required skills, knowledge, financial means and time. The success of global brands did not happen over time, and it seems that before social media there was always something precious that brand's had – time. Time to communicate, time to create marketing campaigns, time to grow and evolve. Today, in the time of social media – there is everything but the time. Communication between consumers and brands is fast, global, and exposed for everyone to see and comment thanks to social media. Brands are more vulnerable than ever; consumers are in the position of power and now take an equal part in creating brands success. Brand management is changing, and marketing managers are faced with many challenges of navigating brands through social media. These challenges were the main idea behind the article. Explorative qualitative research was conducted by in-depth interviews of ten successful marketing managers in Croatia from various industries. From marketing agencies, food companies, the banking sector to the IT sector and direct TV sales, retail chain of sports shoes and equipment. In-depth interviews provided insight into their opinions based on experience in topics such as advantages and disadvantages of advertising on social media, measurement of advertising on social media, major challenges

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in brand management in a social networking environment; whether social networks and social media are synonymous or two different terms; what are the advantages and disadvantages of real-time consumer communication: and ultimately whether influencers are an indispensable variable in today's advertising or just a passing trend. Results showed that for marketing managers in Croatia some of the advantages of social media are smart and targeted advertising, the fast possibility of reaction by brands, detailed analytics via Google and Facebook, relatively small financial expenses compared to other media such as TV, and communication with consumers in real time. The disadvantages of social media are mostly that it is an extremely sensitive platform for communication with consumers due to the positive and negative consumer comments; potential long-term consumer saturation with advertising; certain errors in communication remain forever, etc. Authors of this paper hope that it will encourage further research and discussion by enabling much-needed insight into everyday challenges marketing managers face in Croatia, as well as globally while navigating the success of brands through the dynamic and challenging environment of social media.

Keywords: *social media, brand, marketing managers*

1. INTRODUCTION

Through the research of secondary data as well as through the acquired managerial and academic experience of authors, several topics constantly repeat through different sources of literature. From scientific articles to an endless number of marketing platforms that deal with the problems of brand management in practice. It was these topics that became the basis for designing a guide for in-depth interviews as the research instrument. Given the extremely fast flow of information on social networks and the constant change of communication between consumers and brands, the idea of examining the opinions of marketing experts who carry out activities in everyday life was formed. Their everyday experience in current topics such as the advantages and disadvantages of advertising on social networks for the market; how the result of advertising on social networks by brands are measured; major challenges in brand management in a social networking environment; whether social networks and social media are synonymous or two different terms; what are the advantages and disadvantages of real-time consumer communication: and ultimately whether influencers are an indispensable link in today's advertising or just a passing trend.

2. THEORETICAL FRAME:

Managing a brand is a promise of a company to the consumer that the chosen brand will always have one of the characteristics for which it was chosen. In the brand management process when personal brands are delivered to products, brands must respond to changes in consumer preferences. Brand management can be defined as a long-term activity that is focused on giving strength to a brand, product or service which then result in market value, brand name recognition, etc. (Kotler and Keller (2015); Šerić (2009); Knepper (2008)). With their development, brands have taken on increasing importance for consumers who eventually get an emotional component as well. One of the most important phenomena of today is the global availability of the Internet, and thus social media has become extremely popular among users. Social media enables two-way communication that takes place between individuals, but also groups. Christodulides (2009) considers social networks as a global community of users that is not limited by territorial boundaries and enables quick connection of users from different parts of the world at almost no cost.

The key of understanding social media is understanding the purpose for what they are used by users and also in what ways brands communicate with current and future consumers via social media (Kaplan and Heinlen (2010); Mangold and Fauld (2009); Curran et al. (2011)). Information is published in real-time and it is no longer possible to delay their circulation, just as content censorship is almost completely impossible. With the advent of social media and social networks, there is no more disconnection among users while innovation is constant and continuous. The possibilities of expressing opinions, feelings and attitudes are limitless. Sudarsanam (2017) states that social media can be defined as a computer-based communication tool through which individuals can create, share or modify information, ideas, interests, images or videos in virtual communities and through a social network. Hudson (2020) points out that the term social media can include websites and applications whose purpose is to enable the rapid sharing of content by users, emphasizing that with the fast development of technology especially smartphones, social media can be considered any internet communication tool that allows fast content sharing and user engagement.

It is important to emphasize the difference between social media and social networks. According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2017), social networks enable interaction between different consumers. Interaction includes posting and replying to comments, rating content and tagging content in particular categories. This includes social networks such as Facebook and Instagram, but also various blogs, content sharing platforms (YouTube) and applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, blogs, and games websites. With the development of tech-

nology, the demands of consumers have also increased. Today's consumers can ask a query and mostly get an answer via social media faster than ever. A consumer can communicate directly with brands through various platforms, where it expects to have constant availability of brands, their quick response and solutions in case of problems. Therefore, global brands can stay on top only if they listen very carefully to the market, consumers and their needs. Especially because today's consumer is first and foremost - an informed consumer, just like today's consumers are aware consumers, which affects the brand selection process. Nowadays, it is not easy to create a strong brand due to the high competition and changes in the communication channels used. Brand managers as well as the companies who own brands must consider all changes in the market. Social networks have enabled two-way communication between the brand and consumers, which has significantly increased the influence of consumers on the success of the brand itself. Today more than ever, the consumer is in a position of power, changing the odds in his favor. On the other hand, brands in the social media environment due to the expansion of fast communication become significantly more exposed to competition as well as criticism from consumers themselves and it is necessary to determine what changes are happening in the process of brand management. The global popularity and reach of social media have enabled consumers to greatly influence the success of brands through their preferences and by sharing personal experiences through word of mouth, but also to influence how companies invest in social media advertising. Soon, social media will primarily depend on mobile technology and the capabilities of the Internet to create interactive platforms through which consumers communicate, create, modify and share content they have created themselves. It can be argued that social media provides better quality, reach, frequency of use than traditional communication channels but with a permanent component communication on social networks remains stored forever and can never be completely deleted. According to Sudarsanam (2017), many companies typically use social media to promote brands, new products and services and communication with the consumers and that is why it is important to organize monitoring of brand-related content on social media and social networks and measure its impact. Keitzman et al. (2012) believe that social media has created a highly competitive business environment and encouraged the continuous creation of new business models in which companies combine technology and innovative business models for the purpose of greater competitiveness. Kumar and Mirchandani (2012) argue that traditional marketing campaigns are going through a change and more and more companies are investing in social media to promote brands through digital content. Buryan (2018) emphasizes that measuring key performance indicators on social media involves measuring how much value is created through investments in social networks. Value is mostly measured in the monetary value (money) that companies invest in social networks, but also in non-monetary value through com-

ments or subscribing to the newsletter. John et al. (2017) point to a trend of increasing investment in advertising on social networks and social media and how 80% of the most successful companies in America have corporate profiles on Facebook. Content generated by brands, such as articles, videos, photos, is added daily through company profiles to encourage consumers to follow, comment or buy these brands. Furthermore, John et al. (2017) warn that these same successful companies, through a conducted research, “admitted” that they cannot claim with certainty in what way advertising on social media creates new consumers. Hoffman and Fodor (2010) believe that in the age of social media, companies should not only focus on the money they spend on social media advertising but that the return on investment should be viewed through consumer reactions and how consumers interact with brands. This approach considers not only short-term goals such as monthly performance but also that investing in social media should be a long-term goal. Brands need to think about why consumers visit a blog or brand profile and what kind of behavior they exhibit when participating in profile commenting (e.g. commenting on the performance of a product) and how this can be linked to a company’s marketing. It can be concluded that investments in social media and networks are not always measurable in money but should also be observed through consumer behavior and decisions based on the available content on brand profiles via social media and this should be observed over a longer period. Communication between brands and consumers through social media and social networks can take place in two ways, depending on the communication goals of the brand. There are many different metrics concerning social media, and brand managers need to understand the subject very well to know what they want to measure. Given that the amount of information that is measured or can be measured is overwhelming, it’s no wonder that this segment of measurement and reporting is often left to marketing agencies specializing in digital communication. However, due to a large amount of information, it is necessary to define what the primary goals of social media communication with the consumers are. For this purpose, communication could be differentiated depending on the goal of communication that the brand wants to achieve. It can be sales-oriented communication where the main goal is for the customer to click on a certain link (e.g. an ad that leads to a web shop of a certain brand) or to encourage consumer engagement where the goal is to initiate communication among consumers, to express their opinions, views on the brand and its products and services.

The effect of sales-oriented communication can be measured. Click-through rate (CTR) is a long-established measure that shows how often individuals click on an ad, link, or e-mail. Chtourou et al. (2002) consider that CTR is important for predicting consumer interest in a product in general or in individual brands, and their behavior when making a purchase. This measure was used in measuring online advertising even before social media became so popular. The rise of social media has enabled the placement of ads through other media, such as social net-

works, platforms, applications about previous web sites, forums and blogs. Today's advances in technology have made it possible to develop a variety of software that allows brand managers to track how much an ad has "brought" customers to the web shop. For now, it is not possible to measure how many consumers who saw the ad through social media or social networks came to the physical point of sale (stores). Certain social networks, such as Facebook and Instagram or Google, have built-in software that allows business users (the profile must be registered) to provide "ready-made" statistics regarding the number of users viewing posts and searching the profile. Cost per click (CPC) is a measure of how much an advertiser is willing to pay when an individual clicks on an ad on social media. Farris et al. (2010) state that CPC (hr. Cost per click) owners of social networks (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube) or search engines (Google) allow advertisers to launch and broadcast their ads. Each time a visitor clicks on the specified ad, the advertiser must pay a certain (agreed) amount to the owner and hence the name cost per click. On the other hand, in communication aimed at encouraging consumer participation in brand communication (engagement), the elements that are most monitored by agencies and companies themselves are several positive reactions of consumers to the publication of the brand ("likes"); how many times the post has been "shared" by consumers; how many comments a particular brand-related post "received" from users. For brands to be able to define what they want to track from communication with the consumers on social media, they must clearly define what the goals they want to achieve by communicating on social media are. Measuring the effectiveness of communication and advertising of brands on social media and networks certainly needs further research, mainly due to the complexity of the issue itself. Services and what exactly can be monitored and measured on social media are constantly changing and upgrading mostly under the influence of brand managers and brand owners, as well as their need for the optimization of communication with consumers. By increasing the possibility of everything that can be measured in consumer-brand communication, the "appetite" of brands continuously grows, changing the parameters of what is measured in social media communication.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

3.1. Methodology and sample

The designed research instrument was a guide for in-depth interviews. Participating marketing managers were given appropriate instructions, and inter-

views were conducted online due to the current Covid 19 pandemic, and after completing the interview, authors conducted analysis -

The sample is the size of 10 marketing experts (n=10) from well-known companies in Croatia from various industries (marketing agencies, food and beverage companies, banking sector, IT sector, direct TV sales, a retail chain of sports shoes and equipment

3.2. Results

Responses of interviewed marketing experts through an exploratory qualitative research based on in-depth interviews were analyzed by the authors:

Do you think that social media and social networks are the same terms?

Almost all participants (7 out of 10) answered that they believe that social media and social networks are two separate concepts and that social media is a broader term than social networks. Some of the marketing experts answered that for them social networks are range of online tools whose main goal is easier communication and content sharing and that social networks are a part of social media that connects people around the world.

One of the interviewed marketing experts explained his answer in more detail: "I would define social media as a broader term than social networks themselves, and they were created before the spread of social networks - as we know them today in colloquial speech. Social media is a collection of various platforms and media, whether it is applications for communication or information exchange. Social networks (on the Internet) would be one of the social media, and it can also be blogs, services for the exchange of multimedia content.

This question was designed to determine whether marketers separate these terms into two different, or think of them as the same, given that more and more authors in the scientific community believe that the terms should be separated while in public they are often considered the same. Participants who stated that they consider social media and social networks to be the same term further clarified their position by stating the following: "Social networks and social media are synonymous today. When we consider social networks as a marketing channel for communication and advertising, we can transmit various information of all type through them. So social networks have become social media."

Do you consider social media and networks as a necessary ways of advertising?

In this question, almost all participants (9 out of 10) answered that they consider social media and networks necessary ways of advertising. Marketing experts consider advertising on social networks and social media necessary because many people use them daily to get information, look for ideas entertainment even products and that every quality and meaningful communication should include all channels of communication through which it can reach its target group. Marketing experts also stated that nowadays brand cannot afford not to be present on social media and that advertising on social media enables more accurate reach of target groups.

What do you think are the advantages of advertising on social networks? Are there any disadvantages and what are they? In the long run, what is the relationship between advantages and disadvantages - are the advantages or benefits greater than the disadvantages in your opinion?

Participants gave various responses as the main benefits of social media advertising, which are summarized in the five most important benefits. Six interviewed experts consider the possibility of smart and targeted advertising, ie. exactly defining the target group when creating campaigns, to be the biggest advantage of social networks. Another advantage is the possibility of using detailed analytics, which was mentioned as an advantage by four experts. Marketing experts stated that advertising on social media enables the use of more detailed metrics, to calculate and estimate correlations by IP addresses, cookies, and other technical details that proved information how many people saw the advertisement. It also provides excellent targeting capabilities and cost-benefit approach; highly developed analytical tools and follow-up and KPIs through which the performance and performance of management campaigns can be monitored in real-time. Furthermore, marketing experts state as an advantage that advertising on social networks does not require high marketing budgets, which was pointed out by three participants. Two participants as the last two advantages pointed out communication with consumers in real-time as well as the possibility of quick reaction and correction of content by the brand.

It is interesting to note that only a few participants mentioned direct communication with consumers as an advantage, while others were primarily focused on measuring the effectiveness of advertising on social networks and analyzing the return on investment. As for the disadvantages of advertising through social networks, the answers of marketing experts are quite different and there is no one

universal disadvantage that everyone mentions. Thus, three marketing managers stated that they consider it a disadvantage because social networks are an extremely sensitive platform for communication with consumers due to the fast change in both positive and negative comments. The following shortcomings are further mentioned: certain communication errors remain on the Internet forever; long-term consumer saturation with advertising; constant communication and presence (once you start communicating on social networks, it must be constant and regular); a significant part of the market and advertising space belong to information “giants” (Google and Facebook).

Where participants are unanimous is the answer to the question of whether the advantages or benefits of advertising on social networks outweigh the disadvantages. One respondent explains the benefits of using social networks in the following way: “Social networks can target audiences by age, gender, location, interests, use of certain applications, ads can be stopped and resumed as needed, and there is a possibility for them to be displayed/shown at only a certain time of the day. Certainly, one of the bigger advantages is the relatively simple learning that anyone can master, for example, Facebook offers a handful of free online courses and tips for learning to advertise as efficiently and quickly as possible.

Do you think that the growing negative perception of social networks in terms of excessive use can hurt brands that are advertised through them?

Given the frequent criticism and warnings in media regarding the excessive use of social networks, especially among young people, this question is aimed to find out whether marketers think that the possible negative perception of social networks can in any sense negatively affect brands that are advertised through them.

Respondents unanimously replied that they did not believe that overuse could harm the brand. Marketing managers also think that negative perception of social networks is influenced by individuals and society, not technology and that social networks should not be the only channel of communication with consumers but part of the mix. From their experience they also see that it is not the problem of overuse but of the content that is consumed and that brands need to take the opportunity to promote true values with a positive impact on young people.

One example of the answer of the respondents who elaborated their opinion in more detail: “for now, I do not see such a danger. The same could probably be said for other media (such as TV, etc.), but it did not affect the effectiveness of advertising in these channels or the expected ROI. Brands must be where their audience is and they need to communicate in a relevant way, but certainly socially

responsible, and we already see numerous examples of brands engaged in campaigns to reduce social networks or “addiction” of this type (eg Huawei).”

Do you also measure social media advertising results?

Current issue related to social media advertising; How do companies in Croatia measure the results of advertising on social networks?

Nine managers answered that they measure the effectiveness of advertising on social networks, while one answered that it is the task of the company (client, because it was answered by the respondent who is a manager in a marketing agency). The answers differ in terms of measurement depending in which company the manager works in. Participants who answered affirmatively use the different measurement methods. Marketing agencies measure by using fully measure our every step on social networks and constantly improve communication according to the obtained analytics. They are focused mainly on user activity and are less sales oriented. Food companies fully measure every step on social networks and constantly improve communication according to the obtained analytics provided by partner marketing agencies and via Google analytics. Companies for direct TV sales for example measure the direct link to the website, from which page the customer came, the time spent on the page.

It can be seen from the given answers that the measurement differs depending on the needs, ie the purpose of advertising. Companies that deal with online sales can use the available metrics to measure how many customers clicked, for example, on an ad that leads them directly to the web shop, i.e. they can directly link the impact of ads and purchases in the web shop. What such a company cannot get insights into is how much advertising on social networks “brought” consumers to, for example, the physical store that the company has because, as one marketing expert t stated: that a large number of people in Croatia still research online but buy offline . On the other hand, companies that do not have a web shop, measure by measuring the interaction or reaction of consumers to certain posts that the company places through its profile pages on social networks. This indicates that there are two types of measuring the profitability of advertising on social networks, which is carried out by companies and marketing agencies in Croatia. One type of measurement is sales-oriented and measures the direct impact of ads on consumer purchases, but this type of measurement is most accurate if the company has its web shop. The link between social media ads and total sales in physical stores cannot be calculated at this time. The second type of measurement is related to the interaction of consumers and the brand on social networks, which is more focused on the image and perception of the brand.

How satisfied are you generally with the level of your investment in social media? Do you consider the level of current investment enough to achieve your business goals? Will you invest in the future? Why?

All interviewed marketing managers answered that they are satisfied with the level of their investments and that they plan to invest more in the future. Some of the marketing experts answered that their companies increase budget for the Internet as a sales channel as well as for social media every year. They also stated that believe that investment in social networks will not decrease, and time will show which trends in digital advertising will change, so they will adjust the budget accordingly.

Do you think brand management in the age of social media and media is simpler or more complex than it was 10 years ago? Compare today's brand management with that of social media before. What were the main challenges before the advent of social media, and what today?

Nine marketing managers answered that brand management is more complex today than before the age of social networks and that the primary reason is the rapid flow of information, although they consider it also as a positive side because it encourages greater efficiency. Some of the challenges they are also facing are how to stand out from the crowd, be different and more successful, follow trends, that the consumers are much more informed, engaged and involved than before and that it is extremely important to have adequate competencies for quality brand management in the age of social networks,

Social networks allow real-time communication. What are the advantages and disadvantages of communicating with consumers in real-time?

Participants again gave different answers, i.e. there is no single answer about which they agree. Thus, for the advantages of real-time communication with consumers, they stated that advantages of communicating with consumers in real time are fast placement of news, quick access to consumers, quick feedback, direct communication with the consumer enables deeper, faster and better acquaintance with the brand. For the disadvantages of communication with consumers in real-time, marketing experts stated the following: consumers expect immediate answers, if the brand does not react today it is a lost consumer tomorrow; everything a professional can do for his brand, an amateur can destroy with criticism; there is a growing need to have a person in charge of social networks within the

company, additional resource planning is needed; greater exposure to competition. The competition sees complete communication with consumers. The answers show that respondents consider the main advantages of social media to be quick access to consumers and their preferences; simpler monitoring and detection of trends among consumers, while on the other hand, they consider exposure to be the biggest drawback.

The answers show that respondents consider the main advantages of social media to be quick access to consumers and their preferences; simpler monitoring and detection of trends among consumers, while on the other hand, they consider exposure to be the biggest drawback. The exposure of brands takes place in two different ways. The first one is exposure to competition, which means that the competition can at any time have an insight into the communication between the brand and consumers, as well as the activities that the brand carries out on social networks. The second is consumers themselves and impact of their negative comments and criticisms that can have a detrimental effect on the brand image. One of the marketing managers summarized the advantages and disadvantages of a real-time brand and consumer communication “; *Communication, but one that is of quality, that is structured, affirmative and with a sincere desire to solve a problem is extremely important on social networks for brands because everything else creates a negative and counterproductive effect. At the same time, the advantages can also be disadvantages if you do not communicate professionally and appropriately.* “

Another marketing manager answered that *Direct communication allows the consumer to ask a question openly and transparently and get a quick answer. The speed factor plays a big role since the competition is also present on social media. We must stand out somehow. There is also a lack of real-time communication because it requires the employment of additional staff or to increase the workload of existing ones.*”

How do you assess the influence of influencers on brand perception? Do you consider them useful? Can they also be considered a threat to brand success? What are the general advantages and disadvantages of influencers? Do you consider influencers a current or permanent phenomenon in the evolution of brand management?

When asked how they rate the impact of influencers on brand perception and whether they are useful marketing experts consider influencers useful but only in certain industries such as fashion, beauty, sports and less in tourism, FMCG and “more serious industries”. One of the more interesting answers of marketing experts was that *influencers have been proven to be useful, but the point is that*

there are much more useful marketing tools, advertising tools and communication channels. Influencers function for more women-oriented companies. Men are hardly a target group for influencers at all."

Whether they consider influence to be a current or permanent phenomenon marketing managers answered that it has become a permanent option and that influencers will exist as long as there are social networks, especially since they consider influencers have become new celebrities and most importantly that the influence of influencers will grow because consumers trust the real person more. Marketing managers also think that influencers, ie people of influence, existed before social networks and that they are not new, but social networks have enabled them greater reach and easier access to "followers". One of the interviewed marketing experts answered that *"Oral transmission of experience has always been one of the strongest assets of marketing, and even today. What makes today's influencers different from previous ones is the number of "followers". Once upon a time, these were neighbors who trusted each other, and today, these are people who have created profiles on social media and offer their product or service review services. That's why influencers need to be chosen carefully."*

What do you consider to be the biggest challenge of future brand management in the social media environment? Please explain your thoughts!

Marketing experts provided answers that can very clearly give an overview of brand management in the social media environment. For them it is becoming increasingly difficult to "manage" brands, consumers now have a greater impact on success than the brands themselves. One of the biggest challenges is how to continuously create interesting content, especially since consumers are saturated with large numbers of campaigns. There is a constant appearance of new social networks, there are no more loyal consumers, and re-adjustment of communication is constant. Also, a big challenge is finding a way to communicate efficiently for each target group and how to choose the right social network for your target group.

From the answers of the interviewed marketing managers, it can be concluded that there are many challenges in the process of brand management in the social media environment and how social media contributed the most to the extremely fast flow of information, which also creates the biggest problem - how to keep consumer communication on social networks "under control". The answer to that question is - very difficult, in fact impossible, even with significant investment, you need constant brand engagement, quick customization, and to constantly create interesting content.

3.3. Research limitations

Even though the sample of marketing experts is rather limited, it allows insight into daily problems of managing brands in the environment of social media. Further research space is visible in the area of the impact influencers have on consumer decision to purchase. The analysis of the in-depth interviews revealed that cooperation with influencers did not generate equal success in all industries or have an equal impact on men and women, and it is necessary to explore more closely areas where they achieve the greatest success such as beauty and fashion.

4. CONCLUSION

The aim of this exploratory qualitative research was achieved - to gain insight into the opinions of marketing experts who manage brands daily with special emphasis on the impact of social networks on the very process of brand management in the social media environment.

The interviews were first intended to detect whether marketing experts in practice consider social networks and social media to be the same term or as two different terms, given that they are often described in public as the same term. Almost all respondents answered that they consider the above as two separate concepts, or, to be more exact, social networks as part of social media. Also, almost all respondents believe that social media and networks are a necessary way of advertising mostly because today more and more people spend time on social networks looking for information, shopping, socializing, and that brands must be where their consumers are. Furthermore, marketing experts were asked what they consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of social media advertising. Some of the advantages are smart and targeted advertising, high possibility of reaction by brands, enabled detailed analytics via Google and Facebook and relatively small financial expenses compared to other media such as TV, and communication with consumers in real time. The shortcomings that were stated by interviewed marketing experts is that social media is an extremely sensitive platform for communication with consumers due to the fast exchange of positive and negative consumer comments; potential long-term consumer saturation with advertising; certain errors in communication remain forever, etc. Where managers fully agree is the fact that the benefits of social media advertising are considered to outweigh any disadvantages. Participating managers also pointed out that any negative perception of the use of social networks can negatively affect the perception of brands advertised on it.

Primarily because they believe that the negative impact on the brand can only be due to failed communication, not the medium on which it takes place, and how social networks for brands should not be the only channel of communication but part of the mix. Also, how throughout history every technological advancement like TV or computers have initially had a negative public perception. When asked whether they measure the results of advertising on social networks and media, they again unanimously answered that they do. There was a difference in what exactly is measured and in what way. The conclusion is that there are two types of measuring the efficiency of advertising on social networks, which is mostly carried out by companies and marketing agencies in Croatia. One type of measurement is sales-oriented which measures the direct impact of ads on consumer purchases, but this type of measurement is most accurate if the company has its web shop. The link between social media ads and total sales in physical stores cannot be calculated at this time. The second type of measurement is related to the interaction of consumers and the brand on social networks, which is more focused on the image and perception of the brand. It is mostly measured by marketing agencies and then presented to customers. That is why marketing experts say that there is a growing need for staff that will carry out this type of measurement within the company. Managers who participated in in-depth interviews also answered almost unanimously that they are satisfied with the level of investment in social networks by their companies and that, they plan to increase investments in advertising through social media and networks in the future. Most respondents believe that today it is more complex to manage brands than ten years ago and see the challenge in the rapid flow of information among consumers and that this is why it is harder today than ever to be interesting to consumers, create interesting content and be more successful from the competition. Especially because consumers trust each other more than brand and how brand managers must have additional skills for quality brand management. As for real-time communication with consumers, marketing managers believe that such communication has its advantages and disadvantages. The biggest advantages are quick access to consumers' feedback, and how it is possible to react quickly in case of problems. On the other hand, it can be a disadvantage because if a brand does not respond to criticism as soon as possible, the consumer is lost. As a disadvantage, they also point out the double exposure, one towards consumers and their comments, the other towards the competition, which can very easily follow their communication with consumers. Marketing experts also provided insight from experts on their thoughts about influencers and what impact they have on consumers. Interviewed managers find them useful because they can present products in a "more natural way", while some believe that they are most useful in certain industries such as fashion and beauty, and less so in tourism, FMCG and "serious industries". Regarding the topic of whether they consider influencers to be a permanent or current phenomenon, some managers believe

that influencers will exist as long as will social networks, while some believe that influencers existed before social networks and are not new, but social networks have enabled them easier access to “followers”. The last question of the in-depth interview with marketing experts was what they consider the biggest challenge in further brand management in the social media environment. They answered that they consider the following to be the main challenges: increased consumer influence and how it is no longer possible to “manage” brands; the right choice of social networks for your target group; choosing the right advertising strategy; how to continuously create new and interesting content for the consumer, who is saturated with a large number of campaigns; detecting and quickly adapting to new communication channels; brand managers who are educated and know how to recognize upcoming trends. Conducted exploratory research provides a realistic insight into the thinking and issues faced by managers as marketers who manage brands in practice. Participants are aware of the advantages and disadvantages of brand management in a social media environment. Their attitudes are similar in some issues, while others are the result of action exclusively in their (micro) segment. Managers’ problems change depending on the segment in which they operate (food sector, marketing agency, IT sector, etc.). It is also evident that by reviewing the available literature, marketing experts in Croatia do not lag in detecting communication trends compared to their counterparts in the rest of the world.

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IZAZOVI U UPRAVLJANJU MARKAMA PRISUTNIMA NA DRUŠTVENIM MEDIJIMA IZ PERSPEKTIVE MARKETING MENADŽERA

Summary

Stvaranje uspješne marke oduvijek je bila dugoročna aktivnost koja je zahtijevala određene vještine, znanje, financijska sredstva i vrijeme. Uspjeh globalnih marki nije se dogodio preko noći. Prije pojave društvenih medija i mreža, marke sui male nešto dragocjeno što danas više nemaju – vrijeme, Vrijeme za komunikaciju, vrijeme za izradu marketinških kampanja, vrijeme za rast i razvoj. Danas, u vrijeme društvenih mreža - postoji sve osim vremena. Komunikacija između potrošača i maraka je brza, globalna i dostupna svima na komentiranje zahvaljujući društvenim mrežama. Marke su ranjivije no ikad, a potrošači u poziciji moći i aktivni sudionici stvaranja (ne) uspjeha marke. Upravljanje markama se mijenja, a marketing menadžeri suočeni su s mnogim izazovima upravljanja markama prisutnim na društvenim mrežama. Navedeni izazovi postaju glavna ideja ovog rada. Kvalitativno istraživanje provedeno je metodom dubinskih intervjua s deset uspješnih marketinških menadžera u Hrvatskoj iz različitih industrija. Od marketinških agencija, prehrambenih poduzeća, bankarskog sektora do IT sektora i izravne TV prodaje, maloprodajnog lanca sportske obuće i opreme. Provedeno istraživanje pruža uvid u razmišljanja sudionika o temama poput: prednosti i nedostaci oglašavanja na društvenim mrežama; mjerenje oglašavanja na društvenim mrežama; glavni izazovi u upravljanju brendom u okruženju društvenih mreža; jesu li društvene mreže i društveni mediji sinonimi ili dva različita pojma; koje su prednosti i nedostaci komunikacije s potrošačima u stvarnom vremenu; jesu li influenceri nezamjenjiva varijabla današnjeg oglašavanja ili samo prolazni trend. Rezultati istraživanja pokazali su da marketing menadžeri u Hrvatskoj prednostima društvenih medija smatraju pametno i ciljano oglašavanje, brza mogućnost reakcije marki, detaljna analitika putem Googlea i Facebooka, relativno mali financijski troškovi u usporedbi s drugim medijima kao što su TV te komunikacija sa potrošačima u stvarnom vremenu. Kao neke od nedostataka društvenih medija navode kako je to iznimno osjetljiva platforma za komunikaciju s potrošačima zbog brze izmjene pozitivnih i negativnih komentara potrošača; potencijalno dugoročno zasićenje potrošača oglašavanjem; određene pogreške u komunikaciji ostaju vidljive zauvijek. Namjera ovog rada je potaknuti daljnja istraživanja i rasprave omogućujući prijeko potreban uvid u svakodnevne izazove s kojima se marketinški menadžeri suočavaju u Hrvatskoj, upravljajući markama u dinamičnom i izazovnom okruženju društvenih medija.

Ključne riječi: društveni mediji, marke, marketing menadžeri