ATTRACTING CONSUMERS BY USING EMOTIONAL MESSAGES

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on strategies for attracting new consumers in the context of a complex competitive environment. In order to discover suitable recipes, a number of studies conclude that the human being is more influenced by emotions in decision making. Therefore, the appeal to emotion is a preferred advertising practice which aims to establish a lasting connection between the client and the product.*
One of the most popular concepts associated to the domain is Lovemark. The idea seeks to "upgrade" the products using mystery, synesthesia and empathy, without neglecting the balance between love and respect shown to the public. Lovemark is the core term approached, but the focus is also on related practices in terms of using emotional elements, emotional marketing and branding. The purpose of this paper is to show that emotion is used in a "rational" way in promotion campaigns, as loyalty translates into profit for related organizations. In addition, long-term gain is due to the relationship created.
The emotion is perhaps best shown by the stories and therefore advertising focuses on another interesting concept - storytelling. A strong brand or a genuine Lovemark offers its users a complete experience and this is possible thanks to experiential marketing. Creative use of new media and technologies contributed to the application of these ideas. The paper combines the theoretical frame with examples that capture the strength of emotion in advertising.

Keywords: *lovemarks, emotional connections, emotional marketing, storytelling, brand experience*

1. An overview of the Lovemark concept

The concept of Lovemark appeared in marketing in the year 2004, at the initiative of the executive director of Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency Kevin Roberts. The idea was both appealing and daring, as it aimed to replace the brands or at least take them to another level. *All you need is love!* Love came to constitute the saving solution for brands.
It takes three key-ingredients for a product to qualify as a lovemark: *mystery*, rendered through impressive stories, ancient times, myths, dreams and a lot of inspiration, then the creation of a complete experience through the union of the five senses (*sensuality*), as well as a close relationship with the consumer

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(*intimacy*) provided by commitment and empathy. [1] In parallel with this first set of ideas, an additional coordinate is proposed and exploited: the *love-respect coordinate*. The system aims to measure both the level of emotion and that of commitment as efficiently as possible. [2] A genuine lovemark both loves and respects its clients.

The essence of the lovemark concept is based on a simple, but efficiently used idea: the human being is considered to be a reasonable being, but the truth is that it is fairer to assert that the human being is influenced by emotions. Neurologist Donald Calne holds that „the basic difference between emotion and reason is that the former leads to actions, while the latter determines the conclusions." [3] As modern buyer, the individual enjoys choosing his/her own "settings" and resorts more and more to *personalization*. [4] Consequently, brands are continuously changing and so is the buyer, who does not only wants to listen to advertising messages but also to be part of them.

The modern client's critical spirit is more and more developed and he/she seems to become immune to the daily invasion of messages. But this appeal to emotions determines us to choose, keep and use certain brands. „Lovemarks are special, charismatic brands which people love and strongly defend; products, services and experience create long-term emotional relationships with the consumers." [5] A lovemark succeeds in pushing a consumer's loyalty beyond reason, forming a special connection.

Several researchers accomplished different studies regarding the identification of the factors which determine loyalty for a certain product and they suggested various modalities in which the phenomenon known as *brand loyalty* can be measured. The battle between brands no longer takes place on the shelf, but has moved its battlefield in the consumer's mind, but especially in his/her heart. George Brown believes that there are different types of "loyal customers": the ones who always buy the same brand (*hardcore loyals*), clients which favor two or three brands of the same category (*split loyals*), a group which buys a single brand, but only for a limited period of time (*shifting loyals*) and finally, people who are always looking for new things, who are

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[1] Kevin Roberts, *Lovemarks. The future beyond brands*, powerHourse Books, London, 2004, pp. 74-79.

[2] Kevin Roberts, *Future Beyond Brands*, http://www.saatchikevin.com/lovemarks/future-beyond-brands/, Accessed 18 March 2015, 14:15.

[3] Brian Sheehan, *Loveworks: How the world's top marketers make emotional connections to win in the marketplace*, powerHouse Books, New York, 2013, p. 16.

[4] Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York University Press, New York, London, 2006, p. 68.

[5] Radu Florescu, *Brands and Lovemarks*, http://markmedia.ro/article_show.php?g_id=493, Accessed 18 March 2015, 15:30.

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consequently called *switchers*.[6] A true lovemark falls into the first category, meaning that it manages to attract the customer so much during the purchase act, that the client no longer feels the need to try similar products or if he/she does so, out of curiosity, they will always return to the original lovemark.
The website dedicated to this movement, supported by Saatchi & Saatchi agency, contains a section dedicated to the most appreciated lovemarks stories. For example, Coca-Cola is not only one of the most popular and sold brands at an international level, but also an emblematic lovemark. This special category of products also brings joy into the children's world. In an era of hi-tech toys or "supermodel" dolls, Japanese company Sanrio brings a cute kitten to children's attention: "Hello Kitty". Interestingly, the character has no mouth because, according to its creators, it speaks a universal language of the heart. Another lovemark appreciated by consumers of all ages is Kinder Surprise, which combines chocolate, children's favorite dessert, with the happiness of discovering a new surprise every time.
Each of us has a lovemark. Some of us cannot imagine one day without our iPhone, others without their favorite coffee, while CEO Kevin Roberts confesses that he has been using the Head & Shoulders anti-dandruff shampoo for years, despite being hairless… „It is my Lovemark!" About this aspect, we remind a personal example, Nivea cold cream. The name of the product comes from Latin and is translated as "snow-white". As it has been used in the family for many years, this cold cream has come to represent the favorite cosmetic product, even after trying other brands. We have noticed that the image of this product as a family tradition is a common trait of many Nivea consumers and it is also the basis of the campaign marking the company's 100 years of existence on the market.

2. Emotion in advertising

As mentioned previously, a lovemark tries to maintain the balance between the love and respect offered to consumers. If the latter aspect was highly debated upon due to brands, emotion remains the key element. In this context, the relation between a lovemark and its public may be studied from the perspective of advertising psychology. A simple classification divides emotions into positive emotions (stenic) and negative emotions (asthenic).[7] According to the context, a campaign may resort to the former category or to

[6] Mr. C. Karthikeyan, Mr. R. Karthikeyan, *A Theoretical Reading on Brand Loyalty – A Psychological Sensory Approach"*, in „International Journal of Business and Management Invention", Vol. 2, Issue 5, May 2013, pp. 1-5.
[7] Maria Moldoveanu, Dorina Miron, *Psihologia reclamei. Publicitatea în afaceri*, Libra, Bucharest, 1995, pp. 137-138.

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the latter one in order to promote a product. It is worth mentioning that an authentic lovemark offers more than emotions associated to the present moment; it provides genuine feelings towards the specific brand or the complex and long-lasting state which determines us to continue buying the same product.

One of the most touching commercials broadcast on Romanian televisions is for the Cosmote company. If most of commercials advertising mobile phone companies introduce and urge customers to buy their new offers, this commercial focuses on the importance of communication, especially the type of communication between generations: the child, now an adult, loses patience when confronted with the repeated questions asked by his old and sick father about a butterfly. But remembering a similar episode in his childhood, when the roles were reversed and the parent answered repeated questions lovingly and with infinite patience, brings about regret and reconciliation. This commercial seems like a short film where the beneficiary is only revealed towards the end. Cosmote does not try to sell something in the true sense of the word, they rather aim to increase clients' awareness.

A brand transmits both information and emotions, in many ways. Starting from the commercial to the representative color, the whole package is part of the branding process and it may contribute on becoming a lovemark. The Romanian website WeBuzz suggests a guide of colors and their significance in marketing. [8] Thus:

- *Green* signifies nature, freshness, education and is the preferred color of specialists in tourism, human resources or health. (Animal Planet, Android, Starbucks, etc.)
- *Blue*, preferred by Facebook, inspires credibility and professionalism.
- *Red* is a daring color which transmits power and passion. Many successful brands, among which Coca-Cola, Lego, Canon, Lay's, Avis or KFC prefer this color.
- O*range* transmits a state of wellbeing, happiness and friendship. Brands such as Fanta, Mozilla Firefox, Amazon or Nickelodeon use it.
- Creativity and intelligence are often associated with *purple*. Yahoo or Telekom are just two examples.

Non-colors have their own charm, they can be stable, powerful but also pure: see Apple, Puma, Nike, Honda, Cartoon Network and the list may continue.

[8] Madalina Balaban, *Marketing în culori: Care este semnificația culorilor din spatele brandurilor ?*, http://www.webuzz.ro/marketing-in-culori-care-este-semnificatia-culorilor-din-spatele-brandurilor/, Accessed 18 March 2015, 19:30.

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In some cases, companies prefer the combination of several colors. Among them, we find Google, Windows, NBC or eBay.
The success of a brand is not determined by the color of its logo, but surely this is a detail which, in time, contributes to the brand image. All these details together enforce the identity of the product. The Asian commercials represent an interesting case study because they are visually rich and have a well-developed chromatic line. The colors used in a certain context are known to have a strong connection with the emotions appealed to. To exemplify this aspect, we have chosen a commercial for a South-Korean cosmetic company, Etude House. Unlike the lipstick commercials that our cultural space is used to, which transmit much passion, this commercial is mostly based on colors, happiness, gracefulness – aspects which are characteristics of this area but also of a young target audience.

3. Related practices: emotional marketing and branding

Even though less spectacular than the concept of lovemark, there are other practices which build a product's strategy and identity around emotion: emotional marketing and emotional branding. The appeal to emotions is not exactly a new idea in advertising, but it certainly offers a competitive advantage on the market. For many practitioners, customers' loyalty translates as profit.[9] A well-built branding can go from consumers to humans, from product to experience, from honesty to trust, from communication to dialogue, from identity to personality and the list may continue. [10] Emotion is the feeling which connects a consumer to a certain product.
Strong emotions take us by surprise, the encounter with a lovemark is like a *coup de foudre*, but all beautiful things are ephemeral. This is precisely why emotions must be dosed and divided into several stages: creating the interest for a product, the purchase decision, the repetition of the action, achieving client loyalty, the creation of a *brand ritual* which is part of the client's life and, last but not least, the promotion of the product by the customer himself. [11] In order to better understand human emotions, professor Robert Plutchik suggests a "wheel of emotions" which provides an interesting global view. Other researchers created rankings of different states, in which the first places

[9] Scott Robinette, *Emotion Marketing: The Hallmark Way of Winning Customers for Life*, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2001, p. 8.
[10] Max Ulrike, *Emotional Branding: Playing with the Senses: A Conceptual Approach*, Diplomarbeiten Agentur, Norderstedt, 2002, p. 23.
[11] Steve Goldner, *The Six Stages of Emotional Branding,* http://www.businessesgrow.com/2012/02/01/the-six-stages-of-emotional-branding/, Accessed 19 March 2015, 10:30.

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are held by amusement, interest, surprise, happiness and delight. [12] The social networks knew very well how to exploit the happiness of sharing all sorts of experiences with other people.

Samsung is another brand name turned into a lovemark by millions of users worldwide. Even if more recent versions are now popular, the campaign occasioned by launching the Galaxy S3 model turned a *device*, an object, into a "person". This small piece of technology understands you, shares what is in your heart, remembers beautiful moments, recognizes its owner and is especially created for people. One may say that the personification of the product and the manner in which the features of the phone are presented, bring it much closer to the buyer's heart.

4. Increasing emotion through storytelling

Creating a commercial these days may be considered true art. Instead of the classical urge to buy, the viewer is transported in a different world, by means of stories, which is an important element for a lovemark. The basic concept relies on a simple idea: "Storytelling is an integral part of what differentiates us as human beings." [13] Stories don't have to be real in order to impress, but they definitely require a good script and original characters well placed in time, space and action. But this technique does not solve everything. Stories cannot meet all the company's goals; even as fairy-tales, they must depart as far as possible from clichés. Without a professional approach, a good idea may be lost. [14]

Marks & Spencer is a chain of stores founded in 1884 in Great Britain, dealing with a variety of household, food and clothing products. In 2014, they created one of the most popular Christmas campaigns of the year. The commercial is a very good illustration of the storytelling concept. *#FollowTheFairies* presents, under the form of a short film, the epic mission of the fairies which make people happy for Christmas. The last seconds of the film reveal the name of the company behind the project, namely M & S.

Another commercial which won a place in the top-three most touching Christmas campaigns in 2014, belongs to the John Lewis universal store. This commercial also uses a technique similar to the one presented above, that is a narrative style more complex than usual, a longer duration than we are used to

[12] Courtney Seiter, *Science of emotion in marketing,* https://blog.bufferapp.com/science-of-emotion-in-marketing, Accessed 19 March 2014, 10:47.

[13] Klaus Fog, *Storytelling: Branding in Practice*, Springer, Copenhagen, 2010, p. 18.

[14] ***, *Storytelling: arta de a povesti despre branduri,* http://ctrl-d.ro/digital/resurse-digital/storytelling-arta-de-a-povesti-despre-branduri/, Accessed 19 March 2015, 11:32.

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see on television, nice characters and, of course, a lot of emotion. Thus, we are presented with the unusual friendship between a kid and his pet, Monty the penguin. Even if the boy is a good friend, the little bird wants somebody like him, a companion. His dream comes true on Christmas and at the end we discover that it all happened in the child's imagination, and the two playmates were just two toys. The message which ends this bitter-sweet story is that of giving other people the Christmas they have always dreamed of.

5. Creating the branding experience

When people think of their personal lovemark, they should live a complete brand experience, regardless of the context. Today people talk more and more about experiential marketing, or creating a brand experience which the public should remember. The campaigns which support this idea are numerous and original, which are important steps for the products' identity and image. There are also recipes which guarantees the success of products. Jack Morton believes that brands should invite consumers to *participate*, should be *built* around the people who use them, *adaptable* to the new communication media, especially online, they should create *communities* or, in other words, to connect their own users and finally, to be *useful*. [15]

One of the most viral campaigns is probably the one organized by *Coca-Cola*, occasioned by the Sky Fall premiere. Instead of a usual competition, the most popular soda company in the world came up with the idea of offering to some lucky people, free tickets to the movie. The action takes place in large spaces such as train stations, airports or malls, and well-instructed actors were expecting for someone to come to the vending machine and buy a soda. That was the beginning of a 70-second mission, a real race full of unexpected obstacles, all for a refreshing drink and a ticket to the film. Instead of checking the lid or sending a text message with a code and wait for the result, the participants have the occasion to experience how is like to be a Bond. Thus, this is an excellent example of experiential marketing.

Milka, a brand with and about love, is a true lovemark. Last year's campaign inscribes itself among the most creative ways in which clients are connected with the brand. Instead of sending their message, "Dare to be tender!", in a classical manner, the consumer is invited to experiment it. In practical terms, it meant that the packages in limited edition lacked the last piece of chocolate which, according to the *insight*, is the best of the entire chocolate bar. The

[15] ***, *Experienţa de brand, o stare de spirit*, http://www.marketingexperiential.ro/2013/07/12/experienta-de-brand-o-stare-de-spirit, Accessed 19 March 2015, 12:25.

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consumers could choose between recovering the missing piece for themselves or giving it to someone dear, together with a message. The initiative was a real success, with millions of products, chocolate bars and messages, but most of all with a lot of emotion.

6. Conclusions and observations

Until recently, the final and complete form of a product was the brand state. The competition, the development and the more creative use of the media are only some of the reasons why we have successful brands. This led to a certain trivialization of this idea, which is why some advertisers felt that there is something above the brand and that the lovemark is a product's state of grace.

The lovemark concept is intended to bring more emotion to the people using it, without neglecting the respect for the customer. The idea is suitable for the modern consumer, who becomes more involved in the evolution of the current brands. Even if the human beings try to be rational, they are influenced most of the times by emotional states when making decisions. The lovemark strategy is not singular. Marketing and emotional branding, together with the brand experience, rely on emotions. Anyone can tell stories and create all sorts of emotions, but few brands succeed in remaining sincere, genuine, memorable.

The examples we have chosen are just a few of the most popular brands which succeeded in offering love, emotion, respect and confidence to the customers. Some say that this technique is just another instrument which helps building the product's image and that, in time, something better will appear. Other people believe that the exploitation of emotions can leave room for manipulation. Nevertheless, it is certain that at least from the cases we studied, the campaigns did not simply rely on form, but also on content. They strongly believed in the message they sent, they passed it forward in a sincere manner and they incorporated these values into the essence of the message. Until something even better is discovered, choosing a significant lovemark would not be a bad idea.

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