

GENERAL ASPECTS OF USING NARRATIVE MARKETING IN THE PROMOTION OF LOCAL PRODUCTS IN MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

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Abstract. This work proposes to reveal the importance of promotion of agricultural products in the mainstream media for customer retention and attracting new markets. The complexity of this reality is being reflected in the diversity of studies and programs proposed by the European Union through the Common Agricultural Policy with the target to promote local products. Another fact that proves the previous point is the plentitude of specialists in marketing who are being attracted more and more by direct marketing, achieved through social media.

Keywords: Storytelling, mass-media, The Common Agricultural Policy, social media/networks

INTRODUCTION

Journalist. Journalist Robert Fulford alleges that “we can say about stories what was said about book: maybe some of them were forgotten unrightfully, but none of them were remembered unrightfully” (Fulford, 2001). And his idea is used as a central point by many marketing strategies with which specialists in *Communication* and *Publicity* are trying to, and often with success, make the connection between a product and a story finally to convince the buyer to get attached to the product. The above rule also applies successfully in the case of agricultural products too, which are trying to find new markets

Local branding and the making of well defined identities for communities and places are a part of the structuring of any real and efficient strategy to promote a product which is wished to be attracting clients. This way requested and proposed campaigns from the New Agricultural Common Policy can't be separated from the narration, the storytelling, understood as “a form of transmitting information with the help of narration, which means events told in a logical order” (Șerbănescu, 2007) and recently even *digital storytelling* defined by professor Nick Couldry as a “range of personal stories which are told to a potential public using digital media resources” (Couldry, 2008). We have to accept that internet and mass media offers now the most information and arguments to those who want to have their shopping options made consciously and efficient.

MATERIALS AND MODELS

In the analysis we will use examples of successful promo campaigns used in this area. This will be appreciated based on the data offered by the specific quantifications systems such as the impact on social media and the interest gathered with the help of the site that measures the audience, trafic.ro.

Also, the study is regarding examples of promotion campaigns which will be treated from the prism of content analysis, to reveal aspects which contributed to the construction of fan communities, which can be transformed through the help of clients.

The selected web pages will be three Facebook pages from local producers which are exploiting the narrative marketing, an aggregator platform for farmers and Romanian gourmards, more precisely an agricultural site which explicitly proposed to contribute to the promotion of local products.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The promotion of agricultural products in Romania is done, most of the times after the European models which are based, according to the Common Agricultural Policy, on the rejuvenation of the population, simplifying and greening. The three development axis can be found, most of the times in the marketing campaigns of farmers and processors on the Old Continent and, surely, in the image of the DG AGRI department which is working with communication in the domain.

With a Facebook account destined to communicators and journalists, DG Agri insists on the promotion of European products under the slogan “Enjoy. It’s from Europe” and on the identification of each product with consecrated concepts like: simple, natural and local.

The model was taken over by other Romanian companies too, which choose to promote on their own web pages or social media based on the same principles.

An example in this case is the one of Sonimpex, the first Romanian firm which obtained a European attestation for its products, The Topoloveni traditional plum jam without sugar. With a round logo, preferred mostly by the female public, used as a profile picture, the marketers of Sonimpex put the accent in their campaigns on the quality of the traditional, clean and European assessed product. More precisely they put most importance on what its public will respond well to. Women and men and children as well eat this traditional jam, but women are the one to do the shopping and they must be sure of the cleanliness of the product and of its quality because they pay attention to what they put on the children’s table. And last but not least it releases them from the work.

Another type of company that does advertising based on continuity and traditionalism is the one chosen by Ferma Cățean from Brașov. The three brothers which are dealing with the business are succeeding to impose themselves in the social community by creating bridges with history and traditional values with the target to create a feeling of safety and stability with suggestive images which demonstrate their attachment to the ancestral values like the respect for the elderly.

An aggregator of narrations meant to increase attachment towards the local products is Platferma, a website which wants to ease the connections between the producers and buyers.

Its administrators have decided to promote farms from different areas of Romania with the help of stories of people who work in them. Profoundly narrative, the marketing system is applied to each story. In this case, the accent falls on the idea of “clean and ecological product”, easy to reach with the help of the short chain.

Following the principle of Philip Kotler that “ the best publicity is the one that satisfied clients do”, narrative marketing proposes stories worthy of being remembered and told on by the ones who discovered the products on the market.

CONCLUSION

The advertising of agricultural products cannot be thought outside binds, so be them traditional (family, friends, workmates, mass-media etc) so be them modern (professional networks, social media, new – media etc) nowadays. The latter one is more efficient if the advertising is done with devoted, European terms (like “common”, “cooperation”, “professionalization”, “short binds” etc) and it is addressed to a specific, local, public, most of the time centered in a an area of within 50 km.

Product marketing has the better results the more information you will reveal alongside with a story that will attract a part of the public, well determined in space and time.

The development programs for Agriculture accepted and financed by the European Union are genuinely setting the target to create a local organized and loyal customer base and producers, capable to keep their markets and conquer new ones.

Storytelling brings the traditional elements to stories in the domain of modern communication and makes the link between agriculture and alimentary industry, associated in the collective mentality with rural traditionalism, with family and satisfying the day to day needs and product marketing, introducing the products in a modern society who is based on consumerism and communication.

Consuming is based on quality, health and origin rules – defined by the Common Agricultural Policy of EU – , advertising is using modern methods of marketing, meant to attract consumers whose necessities are diverse and who are desperate on a market of over 500 million inhabitants.

Storytelling bring in the equation of advertising those details that make possible the strengthening of traditional elements and also strengthen the bond with the targeted public placed in the an accessible neighboring and who is sensitive to local stories and whose affective memory can be used successfully for the making of sustainable relationships with the public with the product that was produced in the “home”, the farm or other little family businesses (which will also help to the economical growth of the local community) or made after the well known recipes of grandma or great grandma.

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