

B2B Communication via Word Wide Web

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This study tries to find the connections between business to business markets and online marketing. The application of the Internet has caused more and more changes in the marketing and it has become evident that we are facing not only one technical novelty. According to the empirical researches, the national decision-makers are more and more open-minded toward the topic, recognise and use even more application areas. The theory looks for the possibilities of integration and interprets the effects via effect-models and interactive models. Online marketing is, of course, only one part of the marketing, and as such, it is obliged to support the whole marketing program.

It has been a widespread view for a long time that communication becomes important rather in consumer marketing and besides personal communication it does not have any role in the relations between corporations. During the past years the marketing experts working on the corporate markets had to realize that communication does have a role in their profession as well, and this role is not just ordinary at all. However, this role is differentiated and thus special as well, since the long-term, image-changing communication becomes at least as relevant as the short-term, sales-inducing communication.

At the beginning of my research rationalizing, the chance to more efficiently organize communication also supported the idea of integrated communication. By now it is the more reasonable distribution of the costs and the realization of appearances of the same efficiency from a reduced budget that have become the main goals. The need for efficiency and effectiveness are simultaneously present in resolving communication task, it is the stresses that vary.

If we add other peculiarities of the corporate market - such as the relevance of personal relationships or the influence of the international markets and that of the owners – to this, the picture gets even more subtle and there is even less space for any ad hoc decisions or decisions made without any consideration. A well-supported communication is needed, which organically fits into the process of strategy making. The goal is to create a synergy of carefully selected tools.

The scene in Hungary shows a fairly interesting picture: some companies – and mainly the large ones – has already begun implementing the integration, while other ones question even the righteousness of communication costs. The levels of applying integrations vary as well but its righteousness can be confirmed by all means. The present paper discusses the analysis of the literature and the empirical research results concurrently. Since the goal of my work is to present the implementation of the integrated marketing communication with all of its advantages and pitfalls at a corporate level, I assume this way it is easier to compare what can be read in the international literature to the findings I had in the surveys and interviews carried out in Hungary.

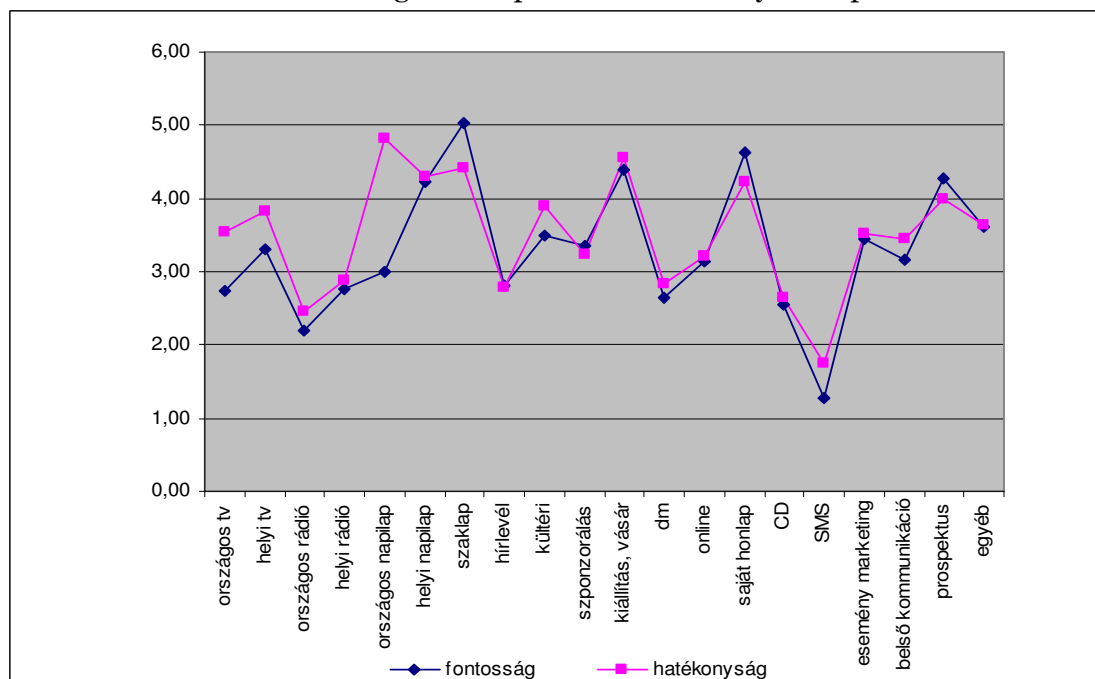
The starting point for the empirical research was given by a foreign research report (Bruhn & Boenigk, 1999) which provided an opportunity to make a comparison in space and time as well. I took the topics of the above mentioned primary research as a basis, however, I took the Hungarian actualities into account when drawing up my

own questions. I found the use of these actualities appropriate only after some adaptation.

Communication tools in the integrated communication mixture

The mixture of applied communication tools is determined by several factors. I examined the effect of the product/service characteristics and also the effect of market share. As I experienced, the corporate market participants prefer the trade press. There was a corporation which spent 90% of their communication expenses on it, the remaining 10% was spent on participation at various events.

Figure 1: The average importance and efficiency of communication tools on a scale ranging from 1 to 6 according to the opinion of the surveyed corporations



1 – least efficient/important, 6 – most efficient/important) national TV, local TV, national radio, local radio, national daily paper, local daily paper, trade journal, newsletter, outdoor, sponsorship, exhibition, trade fair, DM, on-line, own homepage, CD, text message, event marketing, internal communication, brochures, other importance, efficiency

Source: own research, 2004

In most cases the communication decision-makers can clearly see the composition of the communication mixture suitable for them. This kind of knowledge developed rather during practice or it is a result of corporate experience than a conclusion drawn from researches. The communication actions supported by researches are much more characteristic on B2C markets. Looking at the particular media mixture, we can see that with the exception of a few cases the communication efficiency is more appreciated than the importance it has in the communication of the particular corporation (that is, its weight in the communication mixture). When forming the media mixture, in most cases the decision-makers usually follow efficiency.

What they consider more efficient, they consider it more important too, except for the national daily newspapers. They consider the national dailies efficient media

(because of the wide target audience), however these papers do not receive a major role in their mixture. The reason can be found in the expenses.

The judgment of the decision-makers regarding importance and efficiency is not always consistent in every case. For example, in case of trade journals, the decision-makers are led by viewpoints of prestige when they advertize in a respected journal or they have a PR article published. The situation is opposite in case of national dailies. Here efficiency is higher because of the wide public these papers can reach but when it comes to industrial marketing, the national papers are not so important for the decision-makers.

A rationally thinking communication expert applies the tools they consider efficient in their communication mixture, it will be important for them, of course it is adapted to characteristics of the particular industry. The stresses of the communication tools significantly differ in the communication mixtures of corporate market corporations and in that of consumer market corporations. The toolkit of on-line communication (the application of which has not fitted into integrated communication yet) has appeared and is emerging beside the traditionally more emphasized event marketing. My researches in the literature have sufficiently established the origination of the hypothesis. To justify whether or not it is true in everyday life was the task of the empirical researches.

The survey research carried out in 2004 did not justify the hypothesis definitely. Neither on-line marketing nor event marketing was not among the most favored communication tools. However, if we add the expenses spent on the corporate homepage to the on-line communication tools as we add the exhibitions, fairs and sponsorship (to which the events discussed with event marketing are so often connected in practice), it comes very close to the winning national TVs. An important area of my research is to examine the effects of the Internet on the business, marketing and communication.

The managers of micro-corporations browse for taxation information mostly (60%). 56% of the small and medium businesses and also 57% of the decision-makers of large corporations read corporate news. The list of utilized services also contains such services as macro-economic data service, tender monitoring, currency exchange service and professional English dictionaries among others. Among the calculators available on the websites the wage calculator, the currency exchange calculator and the personal income tax calculator are the most popular ones.

Due to the purchase experts' increased need for information the new communication channels (on-line and off-line) play a more and more important role in the marketing of production and service corporations. Although the decision-makers do not utilize all the opportunities given by this form, the tendency is improving. The decision-makers in the B2B sector are much more open to the on-line solutions, that is why this is today's breakout point among the communication tools for the participants of corporate markets.

And what about the contents? Among B2B companies, search engine optimization (SEO) is the most popular of 7 identified online marketing strategies, though social media is close behind, find Demandbase and Ziff Davis in a new study. A leading 63% of respondents said that SEO is part of their online marketing mix, while 60% said the same about social media. The growth of content marketing makes inbound marketing the third-most used online marketing strategy, by 53% of the respondents (<http://trends.e-strategyblog.com>).



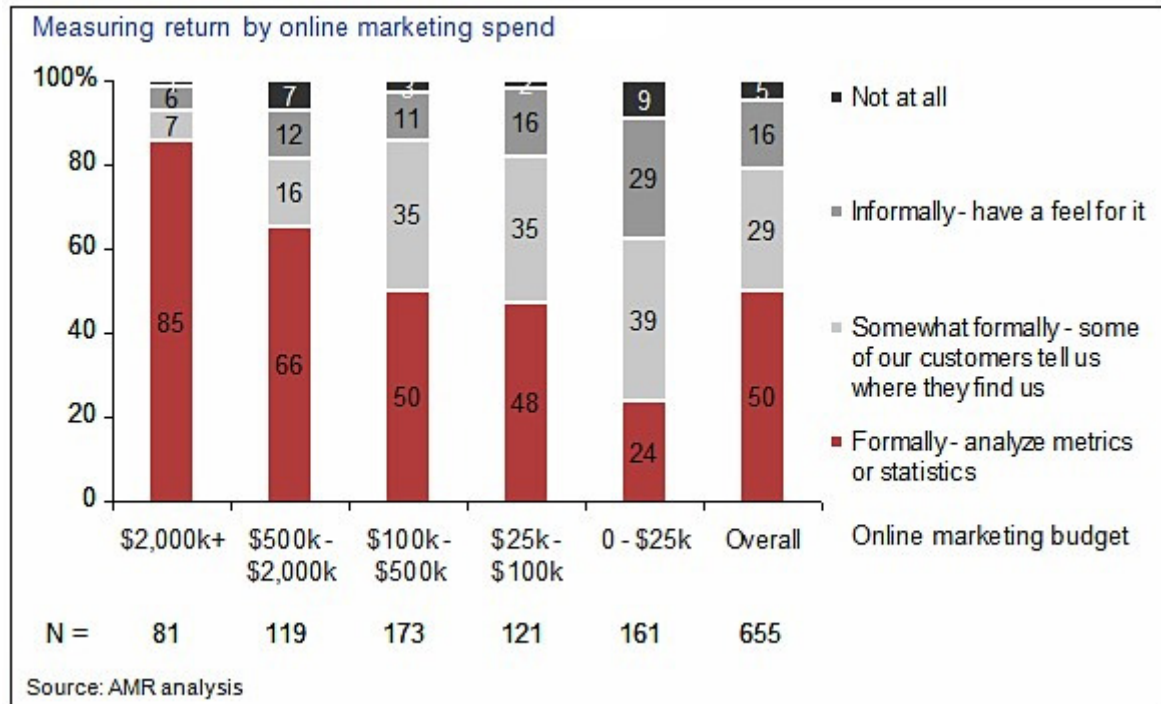
Interestingly, SEO proves far more popular than pay-per-click (PPC), which is used by 41%. That result aligns with earlier survey findings from WebMarketing123, in which 59% of B2B marketers said SEO has the biggest impact on their lead generation goals, with PPC (20%) trailing distantly. In my work I discussed the matters of sales, product features and pricing in the virtual space and also the corporate communication on the web, I introduced the effect model and the interactive model of on-line communication.

When examining the tools of on-line communication I highlighted the differences between the traditional and the on-line advertisement, I also discussed PR on the Internet, the issues concerning corporate websites, the importance of on-line customer service. The latter one can be divided into the following elements:

- Developing on-line customer service
- Ensuring related services
- On-line contact
- Developing on-line customer communities
- Utilizing customer opinions and recommendations
- Monitoring reactions (Eszes & Bányai, 2002)

By creating the on-line customer support system we get such an interactive system of communication where we can achieve a kind of image enhancing by quickly answering the inquiries. Thus the brand loyalty becomes stronger, there are fewer returned goods, there is less negative word-of mouth, questions can be answered faster, the customer service costs are lower, the customers help answer other customers' questions, it can be used for market research and can operate as profit center if it generates significant turnover and an agreement is made with the service provider of the network (Janal, 1998).

According to a 2011 research only one-half (50%) of B2B marketers formally measure the return of their online marketing investments, but those that do say online is more effective than traditional marketing channels, according to a report by AMR International.



B2B marketing is driven by three major strategic goals, according to the study: brand awareness, lead generation, and customer retention.

But measuring financial ROI is often more difficult for channels farther away from the point of sale. Online B2B growth will be driven by recovering marketing budgets and structural shifts in budget allocations. B2B ad spending on social media and lead generation is forecast to increase by double digits through 2013, at annualized rates of 21% and 17%, respectively.

Magazines will lose market share and decline at a 5% CAGR through the period. Online is expected to account for 12% of the B2B marketing mix by 2013. Two-thirds of B2B marketers say online must be complemented by traditional marketing activities. When measuring the channels that support those three strategic goals, B2B marketers who measure ROI are more likely to say their efforts are effective. For example, 49% of marketers who formally track lead generation ROI rate the effectiveness of their lead generation channel as good, compared with 35% of marketers who don't formally track lead generation ROI.

Budget size is closely correlated to the amount of measurement conducted by B2B companies (<http://www.marketingprofs.com>).

The opportunity of creating a database when setting up a system can be utilized as an advantage. When examining the secondary and primary sources I arrived at the following findings: Contact marketing and the Internet are apparently contradict each other, however hypermedia could solve the synthesis of the impersonal mass media and the personalized marketing (e. g. e-CRM) The customer support has become an important part of the communication mixture by now, especially in on-line environment. It may seem to be a contradiction to glorify hypermedia so much, especially when we read that relationships play a more and more important role on the corporate markets. The development of positive relationships requires continuous dialogue and exchange of information.

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