THE COMMUNICATION MIX ADRESSED TO THE FEMININE SEGMENT.
CASE STUDY ON THE ROMANIAN MARKET OF COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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Abstract. Currently, the female segment represents a genuine power in terms of consumer behavior. We can certainly argue that the feminine segment is no longer just a market niche. We can relate to this segment as the majority. To support this idea, we consider the data provided by the National Institute of Statistics. According to these statistics, the female segment sums up 51.4% of the total population, an increase being recorded in the last 10 years, from just over 50% to more than 51%. Therefore, it is not wrong to claim that feminine segment holds the majority in terms of consumer behavior. In this context, the female consumer’s preferences and needs should be integrated into all the communication strategies of organizations. The present study aims to see to what extent, at present, an attention is paid to this segment, proposing as an example a study in an area addressed in a high percentage to the feminine segment, the market of cosmetic products.

Key words: marketing, communication mix, communication strategy, feminine segment, consumer behavior, consumer preferences and needs

JEL Classification: M31, M37, J11, L11

1. Introduction

Nowadays, research shows the increasingly power of the feminine segment. In statistical terms, the figures provide the basis to support this idea. Thus, according to data provided by Reports of the National Institute of Statistics and the Agencies for Regional Developing, the share of the feminine segment in the total population is significant. According to the Report regarding the population census, conducted by the National Statistics Institute in 2011, Romania's stable population was 20,121,641, of which 10,333,064 were women which account for a share of 51.4%.

In this context, it becomes extremely important to understand the female consumers, whereas understanding their needs; doing so, we can choose the most appropriate marketing mix. It is necessary to understand that the feminine segment is different from the masculine one, out and hence the need for differentiation of the communication strategies. Studies in the fields of anthropology, biochemistry, psychology, human development, sociolinguistics and neurology have clearly shown that there are significant differences between men and women, in each of the areas mentioned above. (Barletta, 2007). Therefore, women have a different set of priorities, preferences, attitudes and, implicitly, of communication styles. As a result, their decision-making process is totally different from that of men. Moreover, the feminine segment is prone to establishing an emotional connection, which leads to the establishment of long-term bonds with the brand; or consumer loyalty is one of the main targets of organizations. It is therefore crucial that attention is no longer focused on the product and features, but on the consumer and her (his) needs. Hence the necessity to focus the communication strategies around three messages: the feminine segment value in the market, the need for a marketing addressed to women, a real thinking and application of the communication strategies. This approach is starting to be increasingly frequent; strong brands that until recently target their marketing campaigns to the masculine segment, realized that marketing and improving services, in order to increase the power of brands’ attraction at the level of women, have also led to an increase of customer’s satisfaction for men. BMW, Merryl Lynch and Wyndham Hotels stand up as examples. (Barletta, 2007).

2. The economic analysis of the main players in the cosmetics market in Romania

The Romanian market of cosmetic and care products has registered a positive evolution in the recent years. Of the total market, domestic production provides only 20-30% of total sales, the remainder being provided by products imported or offered by multinationals operating in the Romanian market. Among the features of this market, we want to mention the most significant:

- An ascending trend of this market has been registered since 1991, a year which marked the entry of some major players. During the economic crisis, consumers did not give up buying, but turned their attention to lower
prices. Market share, by volume in 2010, shows that the most sought products, in a period characterized by the effects of the economic crisis, are solid soap, shower gel and shampoo. (see fig.nr. 1) We can also see which is the turnover for each of the main players in this market: Procter & Gamble in 2010 recorded a turnover of 1,264,721,944 lei, followed by Unilever, with 61,111,600 lei, Henkel, with 558,234,839 lei and Farmec, with a figure of 95,929,015 lei.

Figure no. 1 The analysis of consumption of cosmetic and care products, on the Romanian market in 2010  
Source: author’s processing based on the information provided by http://www.modernbuyer.ro/marci-private/2719-marcile-proprie-isi-continua-cresterea-in-tarile-europene

Figure no. 2 The turnover of the main competitors on the Romanian market in 2010 (millions lei)  
Source: author’s processing based on the information previously analyzed

✔ The Romanian market of cosmetic and care products has experienced a significant recovery of turnover in 2011, the major players registering increases, Procter & Gamble having a value of 1,253,875,543 lei, Unilever 727 million lei – the turnover in 2011 of Unilever South Central Europe- Unilever Romania registered a turnover of 61,788,268 lei and Farmec a turnover of 110,890,565 lei; Henkel has slightly decreased, registering 542,369,628 lei. (doingbusiness.ro) (see fig. no. 3). The market of luxury products for beauty and care reaches 60-70 million €. In the first place was situated Chanel, followed by Christian Dior. (Shortcut Research, 2013)

Figure no. 3 The turnover of the main competitors on the Romanian market in 2011 (millions lei)  
Source: author’s processing based on the information previously analyzed
In the year 2012, the annual estimation for this sector was 620 million €, meaning an increase of 1-1.5% compared to 2011. (Euromonitor International Report, quoted by ShortCut Research, 2013) The market leader, Procter & Gamble, recorded a turnover of 1,254,784,218 lei. (Data provided by the Ministry of Finance, quoted by Ziarul Financiar), Unilever recorded 65,616,992 lei, Henkel 606,989,685 lei and Farmec 121,886,781 lei. (doingbusiness.ro) (see fig. no. 4) The figures are even more important, as globally the cosmetic industry will grow at a rate of 3.4 percent over the next five years. The global cosmetics industry is expected to grow to 265 billion $ by the year 2017. The skin care products are part of the segment with huge potential growth until 2017, followed closely by hair care products segment. (Global Beauty Care Products Industry 2012-2017: Trend, Profit, and Forecast Analysis Report, 2012) The luxury market for beauty and care reached approximately the same value as the one registered in 2011, 60-70 million €. (ShortCut Research, 2013)

Figure no. 4 The turnover of the main competitors on the Romanian market in 2012 (millions lei)
Source: author’s processing based on the information previously analyzed

In the year 2013, the Romanians have spent slightly below one billion € on cosmetics and beauty care, most of the money being allocated on perfume (200 million €) and skin care products (201 million €). In contrast, for the deodorants are allocated only 80 million € and for shower and bath products, about 100 million €. The difference comes from the lower prices of the latter ones. (Ziarul Financiar, 2014) (see fig. no. 5). The market leader, Procter & Gamble, recorded a turnover of 1,217,167,184 lei (data provided by the Ministry of Finance, quoted by Ziarul Financiar), Unilever 65,040,049 lei, Henkel concluded the year 2013 with a turnover of 612,5 million lei and Farmec 138,029,018 lei. (doingbusiness.ro) (see fig. no. 6)

Figure no. 5 The analysis of consumption of cosmetic and care products, on the Romanian market in 2013 (million €)
Source: author’s processing based on the information provided by http://www.zf.ro/zf-24/topul-celor-mai-mari-jucatori-de-pe-piata-de-cosmetice-p-g-unilever-si-henkel-se-bat-cu-avon-l-oreal-si-beiersdorf-intr-o-industrie-de-aproape-un-miliard-de-euro-12635092
A consumer preference for external brands can be observed, the reasons being given by the superior quality that these goods would have; paradoxically, the Romanian producers are less attractive for Romanian consumers, but rather international acclaimed, as it can be observed based on the export of products. For example, Farmec sells in Japan, Lebanon, UAE, Hungary, Spain, Italy and Greece and Elmiplant, sells in Greece, Serbia, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Turkey, Portugal and Macedonia. On the Romanian market, the main players are those from Procter & Gamble, whom have the highest market share, Unilever, Henkel and Farmec, but at a considerable distance. In terms of luxury care and cosmetic products segment, the main players are represented by companies like Estee Lauder, Guerlain, Lancome, Shiseido, La Mer, Dior, La Prairie, Caudalie, Clarins, Kinerase, Yves Saint Laurent, Biotherm, Giorgio Armani, Chacharel. The marketing of these products is done by stores such as Sephora and Douglas. Regional, the most prone areas to purchase luxury products are Constanta, Timisoara, Iasi, Cluj, Bihor, Bucharest, Prahova, Dolj, Arges, Brasov etc. (ShortCut Research, 2013)

Cosmetic products’ consumption is 83.7% in urban areas, compared to only 26.3% in rural areas and a Romanian consumer buys, monthly, care and cosmetic products worth 2.7 €, a low percentage compared to the European average (Data provided by Ziarul Financiar, quoted by ShortCut Research, 2013) It is interesting that care products are seen as necessities, as primary products to be purchased constant, while much of the of cosmetic products are seen as expensive products, luxurious, that are purchased occasionally. (Euromonitor International Report quoted by ShortCut Research, 2013)

Among the factors influencing the cosmetics market, we note: the evolution of the public and its preferences; diversification of information and expanding the amount of information received; strong competition; strong marketing campaigns; a system of direct sales; consumer welfare power. In the case of luxury products, although there is a purchasing power, one of the main problems that sale of these products face is the black market.

3. The communication mix addressed to the feminine segment – study regarding the cosmetic products present on the Romanian market

Is the feminine segment different? The communication and the marketing campaigns should be designed differently for this segment? These are only two questions that those working in marketing should provide an answer. Women and men can resemble up to 95% and only 5% of the features may be different. But these 5% really make a big difference. And here we include, among others, differences in perception, in preferences, in skills, in behaviors and in modes of communication. Many of these 5 percent refer to the exact essence of marketing. (Barletta, 2007). Therefore for the feminine segment a much greater emphasis is placed on extra-sensory perception, emotional stimulation, correlated with the attention and contextual thinking, by presenting an image in detail, and also on verbal communication. The masculine segment is much more stimulated by mathematical skills, abstract principles, a mechanical approach in general based on an overview. (Barletta, 2007).

In terms of segment of cosmetic and care assets, the male consumers seem to be interested in classic consumption in stores, and the informing process is done through brochures or catalogs; 46% of them require product information prior to purchase on the spot. Women, in contrast, seeks to combine information online with the offline; 57% of them get information from brochures, catalogs, websites, social networks, articles, books or places of purchase. (Consumer Barometer data, quoted by ShortCut Research, 2013)

The marketing mix consists mainly in the direct sales tool, tool used by companies such as Avon and Oriflame, which provided 20% of total sales recorded at the end of 2013. (ShortCut Research, 2013)
Another common tool used by all producers of cosmetics, is advertising. The most often option is for the product advertising, using the information advertising or the conditioning one, and as advertisement message, most often the narcissistic message is used - this due to the fact that the vast majority of cosmetics use a beauty model to which all female consumers tend to. This advertisement is often correlated with the halo effect technique, since it uses the association of the product with the image of well known personalities (which become the brand image respectively); thus, a transfer of prestige and credibility is achieved, from that person to the company and its products. The relationship message is also used because the cosmetic producers desire a natural integration of cosmetic products in the daily lives of consumers. Emphasis is placed in a large measure to the emotional stimulation (more than the rational one), thus trying to respond to the emotionally needs and then to the rational ones. Among the major players in the cosmetics market, Procter & Gamble is the largest investor in the advertising in Romania.

Regarding the promotion tool, we can notice that lately promoting is made, in an increasingly large percentage, over the Internet. In this sense, we see the importance given to social media. The most visited Facebook pages are Dove (approximately 23,088,465 fans), L’Oreal Paris (approximately 19,077,642 fans), Nivea Romania (approximately 15,840,534 fans), Avon (approximately 10,338,036 fans), Oriflame (approximately 6,103,248 fans), Vichy (approximately 4,107,901 fans), DoveMen+Care (approximately 1,325,802 fans), Gilette Romania (approximately 308,982 fans), Garnier Romania (approximately 244,418 fans), Maybelline Romania (approximately 196,875 fans), etc. Among the Romanian companies, Farmec is placed on first place, with approximately 187,804 fans, followed by Ivatherm with approximately 41,519 fans, Elmiplant with approximately 37,319 fans, Cosmetic Plant with approximately 28,117 fans, Dr. Soleil with approximately 4,056 fans.

In the case of promotional techniques, the most common technique is the price cuts, followed by promotional gifts and contests with prizes. Another technique used frequently is the technique of psychological price.

4. Conclusions

The percentage of the feminine segment in the total market of cosmetic and care products is very high. The communication and PR strategies must be considered and planned in such a way so that the communication message to reach their target. As we have shown previously, the cosmetic and care products’ market is addressed, through its existing products, to both men and women; but these differences between them are what make the real difference in the marketing approach. The feminine audience has both rational and the emotional needs; thus, the companies should consider how to deal with the target, in order to meet these needs correctly. The emotional needs are those that will lead to a desire to buy products, products which will satisfy real needs, rationally coordinated. So the presentation of a product should be done naturally, but creative, representing a real solution for specific needs. Finally, women are “long distance runners”, it is therefore recommended patience and consistency in addressing this segment, whereas the results are visible long term. (Barletta, 2007).

5. References

