



BRAND MANAGEMENT OF ELECTRONIC MASS-MEDIA IN THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This paper discusses about brand management in the media market of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The author focuses on study of leading websites of the country, such as "Daryo.uz" and "Anbor.uz". Also in the paper based on the views of market participants identifies the main problems faced by the media in brand management.

Keywords: Brand, brand management, mass-media, electronic mass media

Development of the market forces companies to find different ways of management in order to increase the number of consumers. Brand is the main for many companies one of ways which allows distinguishing their company is a. Working on the good brand, managing brand's popularity is an essential part of managing process. Mass-media market is a unique market. It differs from other markets. If many market participants which produce a product or provide a service just aims at selling a product or service, mass-media market participants work on two clients at the same time. On the one hand they also try to sell their products - newspapers, magazines, TV-Shows to viewers, readers and listeners, but on the other hand they also try to attract advertisers. Accordingly, in order to attract more consumers and advertisers a company needs to stand out from the others. As a result, if the media is able to build, control, and manage a strong brand it is much easier to succeed.

Literature review

The importance of brand management

The key to market success in any type of business is its effective marketing activities, which includes processes of identifying customer needs, developing products; determining products price, establishing a system of marketing, and promoting sales. As long as marketing is focused on meeting the needs of consumers, the marketing activities always begin with a comprehensive study of the market. Market research studies the behavior of consumers, their tastes, preferences and needs. Since the late 1950's, a system of marketing tools, a certain structure which achieves the goal and solutions of marketing objectives in the target market, defined as the marketing mix. At the end of the 1970's, marketing tools have been combined by Jerome Barney (1991) in four groups, and the system was called "the concept of 4P" - from the initial letters of the English name of each element, namely: product, place, promotion, and price.

It is clear that the different nature of products, the changing role of a service component in various products, intangibility

of services extent influence the choice of marketing tools, principles of forming product and pricing policy, as well as methods for their promotion.

Modern marketing activities cannot be imagined without branding. Nowadays, there is no clear definition of the term. In fact it refers to the process of building, development and brand management. Some marketing specialists consider branding as a science, art, and activities to create long-term preferences of consumers goods. The most successful situation is when consumers start to perceive the brand as a separate product category (Kotler, 2009). Dictionary of Business and Management defines brand as: "name, sign or symbol used to identify the products of the seller and to differentiate from the competition".

David Aaker (2007), who formulated the basic theory of branding, defines brand as "a set of feelings" and defines it as: "a set of attributes associated with the brand name and symbol that strengthen (or weaken) the value of a product or service offered under the symbol". This definition explains each brand in its own precise and versatile, but the most successful and concise. We purpose following definition: "Brand - is a set of perceptions in the mind of a consumer".

In practice, people often confuse two similar concepts - brand and trademark. In fact, brand is not only a trade mark consisting of the name (brand-name), graphic (logo) and the sound character of a company or product. The concept of brand is broader because it additionally includes the following: the product or service with its characteristics, expectations, functional and emotional associations (brand attributes); visual image of the brand generated by advertising (brand-image); the level of brand awareness, the strength of the brand (brand power); perception of the brand's commitment to its customer (brand loyalty) and other (Kotler, 2009).

Brand - is set of the following product features: its name, packaging, pricing, history, reputation and the method of advertising. Brand is also defined based on the values and philosophy of the brand, which exist in consumers' mind; it's not only a picture or image (Berrou, 2007). Brand



performs the following functions: economic, information and protection (against unfair competition).

When it comes to mass-media, we can note that their main components reputation and reputation risks are on the first level(Ann, Bagiyev, Tarasevich, 2005). Functions of reputation overlap with functions that brand plays (Grigoryev, 2006): Information (confirmed information about the object); Protection (protects the good reputation of bad facts, that is, the error does not affect the overall picture of the object if it has a good reputation); Economic (for the firm strengthens name, respectively profitable).

That is why the reputation of the mass-media should be considered as part of the brand.

Mass-media market in Uzbekistan

The Republic of Uzbekistan is situated in the central part of the Central Asia; According to statistics (National Statistical Committee of Uzbekistan, 2013) the territory of the country is 447.4 sq.km, while population of the country is nearly 30 million people. The country can be described as symbioses of the ancient and modern culture, in other words there is modern and new capital Tashkent and at the same time historical and antique Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva cities.

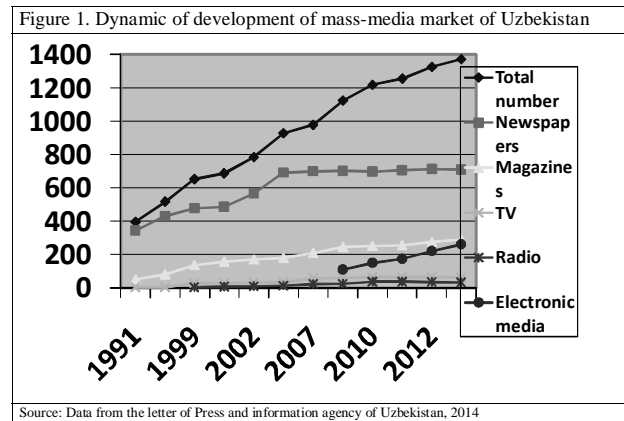
Economy of the country started a new era after 1991 when Uzbekistan became independent. Before those times the country was a member of the former Soviet Union and was like many other members of the union, a supplier of raw materials for the giant economy of the former USSR.

Mass-media market of the country is as young as the country itself. During the first years of independence the number of players on the market was low. According to information of Press and information agency of Uzbekistan (2014) the total number of participants in 1991 was around 395. Most of the players during those years belonged to newspaper and magazines sector of mass-media. In the beginning of 1990's the proportion of newspapers and magazines in total market was approximately 96-97%. There were some national TV-channels and radio stations. The main reason for such a low numbers of television and radio stations was the fact that Uzbekistan for many years was a member of the USSR. The majority of sound and picture media were on the territory of the central cities of Russia. As a result, after the collapse of the Union most sound and picture media became part of the Russian Federation.

Great work which has been done in Uzbekistan became the basis of the development of the media market. As a result, by the beginning of the new century, the number of media doubled, and by the end of the first decade of the 21st century there were more than 1,200 mass-media. The market dynamics is illustrated in figure¹. As can be seen, the largest

share of the market belongs to printed press such as newspapers and magazines. In the recent years, however, their growth is not as it was in the 1990s.

Since the beginning of 2000's the market got a new player - the electronic media. Huge development of the Internet has led to a sharp increase in electronic media. Some printed press started developing their electronic versions, while some reformatted their strategy and went totally to network. In 2008, the number of electronic media was about 80, whereas by the end of 2013 their number almost tripled and reached.



A brief history of electronic media in Uzbekistan.

With the development of information technologies in the country, electronic resources and web projects that have positioned themselves as the media appeared and gradually began to develop. Internet journalism in Uzbekistan was formed spontaneously, often by people who have no relationship to traditional media, which, of course, can be considered as positive moment of formation of this trend. Experience of the first web-publications showed that the Internet can create successful media projects. Since the discovery of the first information sites in Uzbekistan many resources left the web space, but there are some which continue to operate successfully. According to statistics, which was provided by the Press and Information Agency of Uzbekistan (2014), currently there are more than 250 electronic media.

Methodology

In order to study the brand management process of players of mass-media market it was decided to:

- identify the major market participants; explore main issues, which arise during brand management process;
- Firstly, we organized the survey among the ordinary users of internet mass-media. Two questions were addressed to respondents:

Do you visit internet mass-media resources of Uzbekistan?
What is the main internet mass-media resource which you use in order to get information or news?



Gathered answers gave us main picture of level of using internet mass-media resources and the list of top players in this market. However the ordinary readers are not the main consumers. There are also companies that publish advertisements about their products and services. Among these companies were representatives of “Nestle Uzbekistan”, “Click-mobile payment system”, “Pepsi Uzbekistan” “Imkon+ Ice cream”.

The following questions were addressed to company representatives about internet mass-media market participants.

Awareness of the existence of the portal.

Respondents were asked to assess selected media resources on the following scale:

| Select the appropriate definition for you | Point |
|---|-------|
| I have never heard about this resource | 1 |
| I knew about the existence of this resource | 2 |
| I visit this resource as an ordinary user | 3 |
| I promote my product on this resource | 4 |
| I am fully user of resource (as a user and promoter of goods) | 5 |

The level of substitutability

Respondents were asked to assess selected media resources in the frame of substitutability. We asked them:

If you stop promoting your product through this media resource will you find another equal one?

The answer “YES” – gives us reason to believe that the level of substitutability of internet media resource is “HIGH”

The answer “NO” – gives us reason to believe that the level of substitutability of internet media resource is “LOW”

Ones, the key players of internet mass-media market were identified, we asked survey participants to answer a few additional questions. These questions should help in determining the reputation and reliability of the internet media in vision of advertisers.

| Indicator | Select the appropriate one | Point |
|--|----------------------------|-------|
| The level of Internet media brand's reputation | Very high | 5 |
| | High | 4 |
| | Middle | 3 |
| | Low | 2 |
| | Very low | 1 |
| The level of respect among consumers | Very high | 5 |
| | High | 4 |
| | Middle | 3 |
| | Low | 2 |
| | Very low | 1 |
| The level of respect among rivals | Very high | 5 |
| | High | 4 |
| | Middle | 3 |
| | Low | 2 |
| | Very low | 1 |
| The level of reliability | Very high | 5 |
| | High | 4 |
| | Middle | 3 |
| | Low | 2 |
| | Very low | 1 |

After identifying leaders among internet mass-media market participants, we asked top 3 leaders to take part in our survey. However only two of three agreed to take part in survey. Both of the survey was organized through interview face to face. Our respondents were the head chief editor of “Anhor.uz” Lola Islamova and co-founder of “Daryo.uz” Farhod Fayzullayev. During the interviews presenters “Anhor.uz” and “Daryo.uz” were asked about their opinion about development of mass-media in general and electronic segment of the market in particular. Also, they mentioned about the history and steps of development the resource and their competition with other resources. At the end representatives of electronic media resources answered to the following questionnaire:

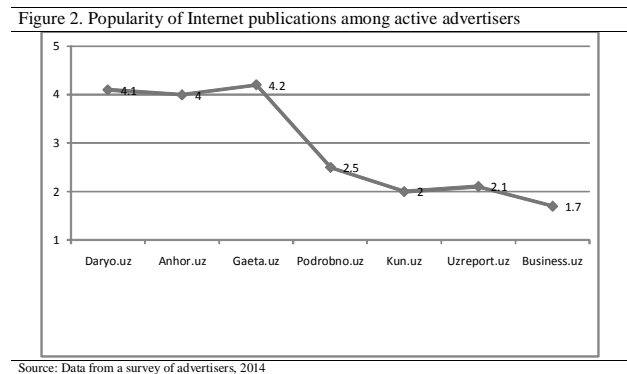
| Nº | Question |
|----|--|
| 1. | What do you understand by the term brand management? |
| 2. | What is the target audience of your resource? |
| 3. | What steps are you taking to promote your brand among the readers? |
| 4. | What steps are you taking to promote your brand among the advertisers? |
| 5. | What are the main factors helping to development of resource? |
| 6. | What are the main factors impeding to development of resource? |

As a result of these meetings we could collect information about situation on the market. Respondents helped us to identify main issues which are arising on the market.

Findings

The first survey which was conducted among ordinary mass-media users, showed us that the most famous internet Medias of Uzbekistan are “Gazeta.uz”, “Anhor.uz”, and “Daryo.uz”, nearly 90% of respondents mentioned them in their answers.

Survey among the goods producers also showed us the leadership of three abovementioned resources. As a result their average rate higher than 4, which means that all respondents are aware of the resources they are active readers of this resources and even some of them run adverts (Figure 2).

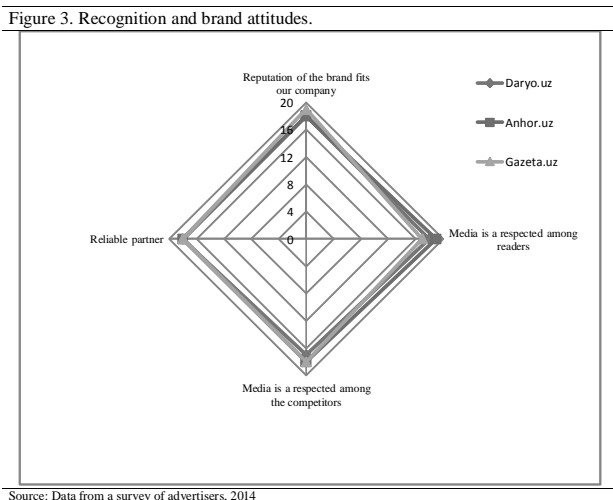


The next indicator which we got was a level of substitutability. Represents of goods and service promoters rated all three

resources more substitutable rather than replaceable. This testifies to the high competition in the market, the advertiser still always can find an alternative resource.

Also, we asked respondents to evaluate these three media-resources. Summing up the results we have obtained the following results. All three editions are reliable partner according to view of advertisers, they got 18 points out of 20. Better reputation among competitors has Anhor.uz and "Gazeta.Uz", while all three resources have good level of respect among readers (consumers). The reputation of the brand is higher for "Gazeta.Uz", which is likely because of long presence in the market (figure-3).

Figure 3. Recognition and brand attitudes.



Source: Data from a survey of advertisers, 2014

The last stage of our research was interviews with main players of internet mass-media market of Uzbekistan. During meetings with represents of resources we could get the following information:

Anhor.uz

The activities of the web portal «Anhor.uz» officially began in April 2014. The target audience of the resource is adults, educated people with higher education who are interested in local and global social and political events. Site has its own authors, journalists and popular bloggers. The highlight of columnists and opinion polls publications is the most interesting aspect of the resource for visitors.

Brand management is necessary for the recognition, promotion, to attract readers and advertisers which effect to increasing of profit. At the same time because of unstable market process of brand management is more chaotic and unplanned. The main tool for companies brand management is social networks.

Dayro.uz

The activities of the web portal "Daryo.Uz" officially began in 2013. The target audience of the resource is the young and middle-aged people in Uzbekistan and abroad. The main content is local and international events, news from the world of movies, music, cars and sports, as well as an overview of technological innovations.

Brand management of web portal is organized through the main product - it which is news. Rapid and high-quality material, promotes awareness of brand. In other words resource In other words, the resource is hoping that prompt delivery, reliability and quality of news will be the main tools for making brand more famous.

Simultaneously, both participant of interview were similar in their opinion that the media need to manage the brand. The main issues that interfere for development of resources are the shortage of qualified personnel, the low degree of payback, financial instability and unstable advertising market.

Conclusion

Based on the above information, we can draw the following conclusions:

The internet users of Uzbekistan are mostly the members of young generation, which gives reason to believe that electronic mass-media market of Uzbekistan has huge potential; During the last 7 years the number of electronic media resources tripled; The main players on the electronic media market is "Daryo.uz" "Anhor.uz" and "Gazeta.uz"; The level of competition in the market is very high, the promoters of the products always can find an alternative resource.; Big 3 electronic resources of Uzbekistan organizing brand management thought social networks, the most popular is Facebook; Main issues which faces electronic resources are shortage of qualified personnel, the low degree of payback, financial instability and unstable advertising market

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