

MARKETING RELATIONS IN THE CASE OF A MICRO-ENTERPRISE IN THE HIGH TECH INDUSTRY

Work in Progress paper

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Abstract

In this article, the development and the change of the marketing-communication of a micro-enterprise is discussed. This micro-enterprise is operating in the field of the medical technology, i.e. in the high tech industry.

The study commenced with the thorough investigation of the relevant literature and from the conclusions of this research helped identify both practical and functional solutions. In case of business-to-business marketing the customer is an organization rather than an individual consumer (Brennan-Canning-McDowell, 2007; Hutt-Speh, 2008) and often involves the management of customer relationships. The differences between communication tools that are impersonal and personal are also introduced (Brennan-Canning-McDowell, 2007).

The concept of the founding of the company is demonstrated, because the field in which the company is specialising, requires expert knowledge and the combination of several disciplines and therefore, attaining more and more emphasis. The development process started based on the know-how and experience from the detailed literature research. Upon the completion of the meticulous analysis of the company name, a further study and evaluation of the logo and website designs followed, based on the guidance from topical literature. It was an important goal to create a logo that aligned, perfectly, with our unique and high standard of services. While studying Fishel-Gardner (Fishel-Gardner, 2000) and the graphical ideal-range (Grant, 2009), we realised that our previous logo did not meet our expectations and the requirements outlined in the literature. From our experience, the design and selection of the colours of the new logo became apparent. The new style adopted, corresponded better to the current trends and reflects more, the expectations for a logo from the researching-developing company. This analysis also pointed out the fact, that the website is not effective enough and it does not represent the nature and values of our projects. The next step was the development of the new website, resulting in a more professional and user-friendly interface containing more detail and relevant information. As a consequence, the new website is more in-line with the logo design, and the new look of the company was created. The predisposition from this development also provided help in the product-politics and in the optimisation of the customer relations. The article demonstrates a truly practical and complex case of the importance of the simultaneous employment of different fields of science in order to achieve success and how does the impersonal communication relate to and support the personal interaction of the business world.

Keywords: micro-enterprise, high tech, medical technology, marketing

Introduction

In case of business-to-business marketing the customer is an organization rather than an individual consumer (Brennan-Canning-McDowell, 2007; Hutt-Speh, 2008) and often contains the management of customer relationships. The success of B2B relations are effected by the right usage of personal and impersonal communication. Unfortunately the marketing literature related to the partner selection criteria is limited. The impact of selection criteria is associated with the interpersonal interaction (such as good and efficient personal relationships) on supplier consideration (Wuyts-Verhoef-Prins, 2009). The matter of choosing the correct partner is not trivial. The benefit of selecting a suitable supplier can be substantial, including access to new markets, increasing market share, filling resource gaps, and achieving efficiencies (Argyle, 1990; Hakansson-Snehota, 2006; Wittmann et al., 2008). Therefore one can't emphasise enough the importance of choosing the partners.

Internet communication has been developing rapidly in these days, which has an impact on the B2B relations as well. For more than three decades, businesses have been using electronic technological developments to exchange transaction data (Albrecht-Dean-Hansen, 2005).

This impersonal communication can often be a dominant parameter in some business relations. However, despite the widely accepted benefits of e-marketing, companies continue to adopt it to varying degrees (Shaltoni –West, 2009).

But in case of small businesses the marketing activity is often not the result of a conscious decision. The basic question here as well is what kind of needs they are able to satisfy better than others (Chikán, 2005).

Marketing is in a thorough relation with all the different parts of business life and it basically indicates the following two things: approach and toolkit. The marketing approach puts the customer in the middle of attention. To create value, it needs an adequate toolkit for the customer. The approach and the toolkit are in a mutual relation: the approach determines the toolkit's direction of actuation, although the enforcement of customer oriented approach assumes the existence of the toolkit. It must be stressed that out of these two the customer oriented, micro-enterprise comprehensive approach is the determining. The condition of success for the micro-enterprise is to create a product or service that is capable of satisfying the consumers' needs thus to represent value for the customers (Rekettye, 2008).

Objectives

In this article, the development and the change of the marketing-communication of a micro-enterprise is discussed. This micro-enterprise is operating in the field of the medical technology, i.e. in the high tech industry.

The article's two writers are the two founding members of the organisation. Our main objective was to reach perceptible developments due to this work, by which the impersonal communication can be improved significantly. It makes the completion of the proposed tasks more difficult or increases the time consumption that we don't want just to collect and analyse the ideas, but we will carry out the activity by ourselves as well.

Usually the base of an organisation's foundation is the born of an idea, but not every idea becomes an organisation. Then for an idea to turn into an enterprise, first we have to be certain if the idea itself is capable of becoming a business conception, if it is able to satisfy an existing need and the business is competent to be successful. A part of the enterprises come into existence because the founding members think that their professional knowledge and abilities are going to be sufficient. Others simply look around in their business environment and notice a business opportunity, a market gap (Sókiné, 2000). This means that before establishing a firm, we must decide first what kind of activity we want to be engaged in, thus the first step is the creation of the so-called „product-market” concept (Rekettye, 2008).

As soon as we decided and created the business profile then there is one more important marketing task to do before registering our enterprise: we need to find out our business name, which is a real by important task as it is determining from many aspects.

After choosing the business name the process proceeds on two parallel lines. One important activity line is the creation of the necessary financial, technical and human resources (Rekettye, 2008; Szirmai, 2009). The other is the completion of the business and marketing plans.

In this article primarily we are going to share our experience with communication tools, that how the impersonal communication supports the important personal communication in business life. Thus this essay transfers the important parameters that are meant to improve the business relationships into practice, with using theoretical approach. This practically is a case study in which we analyse how the improvement of impersonal communication tools effects the personal communication. We are going to show the logic behind choosing a name, then the necessity of changing the existing business logo, homepage and the positioning.

About the company

Our company is a micro enterprise this time. The enterprise can be viable on long term, because the human life and quality of life have always been in the centre; there has always been a need for innovative, simple and unique solutions by which the standard of medical attendance and the patients' standard of life quality can be improved. This trend has been coming to the front in Hungary as well.

The idea of foundation originates from the recognition of how big the demand is for a kind of service, where the hospitals, companies and their products can be examined by a competent, independent firm, where they can develop examining and evaluation methods and last but not least they can carry out professional experiments. We formed a part of the services that it's not just the manufacturers, developers or traders who could use it, but also their users, the hospitals too.

Applied methods

Choosing a name Before establishing the company our first task was to choose a name. Luckily, the number of companies dealing with medical technology territories isn't as significant as in other areas, however many of our great ideas have already been reserved or have been very similar. Generally American company names have already been shown in the database. Mainly we were thinking of a name that is easily and clearly brought out from the description of the main activities, so we continued with looking for a kind of mosaic word that rings well enough. We considered the important „rules” of choosing a name (Ebel, 2009) and finally we decided on the IMEDIM name: Innovator of Medical Implants and Materials, which sounds good even in English. The abbreviation contains the expression MED, which made the asked people think of something medical right away. We haven't found any similar abbreviation. We also searched if it means anything in other languages with no result. The name is simple and according to experience it's easy to remember of. It also stands quite at the beginning of the Alphabet. The name itself doesn't narrow down our activities, basically it contains all the developments and examinations we are dealing with.

Positioning To make relationships better and to make our activities easier to be reviewed, we defined them better, basically we did the positioning according to this. Then we've put it on the homepage in the following categories:

Special parameter We work out the measuring method, measure the desired parameter and then according to documentation we also provide a registered expert opinion.

Surface and coating examination The surface quality of implants built permanently or temporary in the human body and the characteristics of the coating make a significant impact on the answers given by the body system. They also play dominant roles in the therapy's success. During the surface and coating examination of the implants, we can analyse the hardness, roughness, thickness, evenness and the adhesion of coating to the carrier.

The creation of scientific presentation and anatomical model In case of medical technical product the adequate scientific presentation is important, to which a well planned and executed experiment can contribute a fairly strong base. The advantageous characteristics of the product can be shown efficiently through an anatomically relevant model. We take on to create the scientific base of the research presentation, as well as to plan and fabricate a special anatomical model, that if necessary we can also create in a playful style which attracts attention.

Strength examination In case of loaded implants, the reproduction of the reality-similar environment and mechanical effects is needed in order to gain useable result. After creating the adequate environment we execute the implant's strength testing.

Development-research Primarily we deal with the development and result of innovative possibilities of the implants and medical-technical tools.

Company logo We created the company logo by ourselves. We tried many different colours and forms for the first version, but finally we decided on the blue shade. We also drew a microscope next to it (Fig. 1). Rounding of the blue background indicates the field of sight of the microscope. We found it important to show the company's full name and not just its abbreviation. During making our essay we realised our mistakes in the created logo thanks to studying professional books (Fishel-Gardner, 2005; Grant, 2009). It is important for the logo to be modern and to comply with the latest trends. By doing this we highlight that the company is modern and it always uses the latest technology without compromises. This is highly important in medical technology fields, because if we talk about health, nobody wants to compromise and everybody expects to get the latest technology available in our days with all its possible advantages. This increases customer confidence as well. As our company is new, we can't build on traditions and on company reputation, so the logo can't have retro style.



Figure 1 The first logo of IMEDIM Ltd.



Figure 2 A new version of IMEDIM's logo

As a result of the new logo, grey became the base colour and the orange. We didn't use background. We wanted to show even in the logo, that we work on medical technology ground, so first we thought of drawing the first I letter using a part of the DNA-chain and changing it into a human silhouette (Fig. 2). The new logo turned out not to be adequate to our expectations as it wasn't serious

and sophisticated enough, we would rather recommend it to a wellness company.

The usage of simple though elegant arches encouraged us to look for new ideas. The above mentioned application of arches has a positive meaning, thus we were thinking of similar variations. We liked the orange coloured arch, which also symbolises the first I letter in the word IMEDIM, so we improved it more. Fig. 3 shows our final logo. We moved the orange I letter through the D letter's stomach and we decided on using round letters to present the interlocking and interconnection (to other scientific territories). Besides, instead of mentioning the company's whole name we created a slogan, actually a marketing message and joined it next to our logo. We think the slogan is striking and remains in the customer's head. It also shows the problem we would like to solve, so it nominates the targeted market, but it doesn't narrow our activity field as we produce, plan, develop and examine.



Figure 3 The final logo of IMEDIM Ltd.

Homepage We chose and registered the abbreviation of our company as the name of our homepage, i.e. domain. The homepage can be found at the www.imedim.hu. To our first version we gave a simple blue background and put a microscope on the side. The main menu points are shown as the microscope's lenses. That page was created in quite an elementary manner in the simplest way according to our free time and knowledge we had at that stage, it wasn't really aesthetic either it didn't show the company's real trend. However it still made it possible for people to reach us on the Internet. By the changes we emphasised the creation of a customer friendly surface, which primary meant to be able to use the page easily by itself. The users can reach the menu points in different ways, after selecting they always know where they are and how to go back to the previous page where they still can find important information. As for the outlook we used the guidelines and colour combination we had learnt at designing the logo in order to have our homepage in compliance with the trend our company presents. We haven't named our references before, but now we do. We asked for permission from our partners to use their logos on our homepage. We also added our resumes, results and short descriptions of our previous jobs and publications to the list. We created the English version of the homepage with the same content as well.

Customer relations The most important business relations of IMEDIM Ltd. cover six other companies and three different departments of a university. These relationships are based mostly on past notoriety, each at least 3-4 years in length, so we know each other's abilities very well. The cooperation with them mainly covers concrete research-development projects. We get orders also through our foreign professional relations. Our partners mostly come from the engineering, medical-biology and the medical sphere.

Thus most of our partner relationships are based on mutual recognition and strong trust, but direct approach has also happened since the company's new image had been created.

When we chose the customers we would like to predominate on a global level as for our activity. This is due to our own development jobs, which target those resolutions, that can improve the life quality and can be used not only by one potential customer in a certain environment, but can offer advantageous resolutions to many partners on a global level.

The present relationships are in total compliance with our strategic aims, because we would like to build out long term relationships that are based on commitment, on synergistic use of resources and on strong personal interactions. Based on the new communication trend we have received new contacts as well, thus giving the opportunity to create new and long term relationships.

Other impersonal tools To gain higher reputation for our company and in order to prove that the importance of development is unconditioned to us, we have handed out prizes on different university scientific events and have involved the graduating students in our development projects.

We had new results immediately on the following week after the changes: we received orders from companies we hadn't known before and our business partners also showed their satisfaction towards the new communication trend.

Short summary

The case study in the article and the operation experience of the company are interesting from many aspects. Firstly, it adverts attention that the professional B2B marketing communication can be used in case of small and middle organisations and micro companies as well. This is particularly important and true for the born global companies. However when the IMEDIM Ltd. was created originally it targeted the domestic, Hungarian market, but during the creation of the adequate market communication (Brennan et al, 2007) it became a global company involuntarily.

The fact that the founding members' personal network became a part of the business network supports the very same internationalisation process as well. Namely this scientific network has the possibility to become an actor bond (Hakansson and Snehota 1995). From the view of exploiting this opportunity and according to this case study the impersonal market communication (particularly the logo and webpage) plays a significant role. The story is also an example that the appropriate market communication (Brennan et al 2007) can actively support the relationship communication, primary the lead generation.

As for a summary of our study we can declare that after delivering our aimed changes we achieved the favourable results we expected. The new communication amplifies the trust in our current partners; moreover we have received several new offers.

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