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Marketing in Telecommunications: From a Sales Concept to Digital Marketing

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Abstract: The purpose of the study was to analyze the evolution of marketing concepts in the telecommunications business. The prerequisites for the introduction of marketing principles into the management practice of telecommunications companies are shown and the tasks implemented within the framework of the "sales" approach are identified. The research summarizes the tasks of the consumer concept in the context of the increasing complexity of the processes of attracting and retaining customers. Scientific and technological progress, convergent processes and shifting interests of stakeholders have contributed to the introduction of new approaches to marketing activities, the specifics, tasks and models of implementing marketing strategies in the telecommunications business within the framework of the socio-ethical concept, the concept of strategic approach and the concept of relationship marketing are shown. The article examines the essence and stages of digital transformation of marketing activities and their impact on the marketing strategies of telecommunications service providers. The main innovations of digital marketing at the current stage of development are based on artificial intelligence, BigData, augmented and virtual reality technologies. The results of the study make it possible to identify optimal approaches and develop recommendations for the formation of marketing concepts of telecommunications companies.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The variability and uncertainty of the external environment, increased competition, high risks, and saturation with a variety of goods and services are the most important characteristics of modern markets, so focusing on marketing management principles is a prerequisite for the survival and development of a modern company (Kotler, P., 2021).

The evolution of telecommunications marketing as an applied industry concept is related to the stages of development of national industry markets, benchmarks in the market activities of companies and global challenges from the external environment. Telecommunications have always played a huge role in the economy, which is why they have been a state monopoly for a long time (Platunina, G., 2023, Salutina, T., 2023). Interest in marketing from telecommunications companies in different countries was manifested as the national markets for communication services became demonopolized and a competitive environment formed. In the new conditions, operators are faced with the task of intensifying sales, forming an effective sales system and promoting their services. Increasing competition and the rapid development of technology forced service providers to develop their marketing concepts, reflecting the global technological and economic changes taking place in telecommunications. When building their marketing policy, telecommunications companies have always been guided by the most advanced concepts, showing flexibility in the choice and application of marketing tools.

Progress in the field of digital technologies has had a huge impact on the marketing activities of organizations, opening up new opportunities in the field of communication with consumers, market research, advertising, and organizing the process of selling goods and services. And the high-tech telecommunications sector has become one of the flagships of the digital transformation of marketing and business in general.

2 LIBERALIZATION AND NEW BUSINESS CONDITIONS

Over the years of its development, and the doctrine of marketing originated in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century, this theory has undergone significant changes. At first, marketing was a generalization of the practical experience of working in the market of the most successful enterprises, that is, there was a certain lag between theory and practice. Later, a holistic theory was formed, characterized by a single essence, principles and functions, on the basis of which applied industry concepts were built.

Today, marketing is interpreted as a business philosophy, the main principle of which is customer orientation. At the same time, marketing is also a business technology, that is, a set of methods and procedures for working in the market, taking into account the specifics of various industries and fields of activity (Kotler, P., 2022).

The stages of development of marketing theory in the telecommunications business correlated with the stages of development of national industry markets, conditions and guidelines of companies' activities. Under the conditions of monopoly, the vectors of development of the communications industry were determined by the state based on macroeconomic goals, taking into account the development of telecommunications technologies. With the demonopolization of national communication service markets and the formation of a competitive environment, interest in marketing theory began to show on the part of telecommunications companies from different countries. Under these conditions, former state-owned enterprises faced the task of maintaining their subscriber bases, and the activities of new operators were aimed at creating them.

Initially, the marketing activities of telecommunications companies were carried out within the framework of the so-called sales concept, which became widespread in the world commodity markets in the 1950s and 1960s. In relation to telecommunications, this concept focused the attention of the operator companies on the formation of an effective sales system and promotion of their services. However, it should be noted that there are differences in approaches and attitudes towards marketing on the part of reorganized and new operators. In order to succeed and gain a foothold in the market, new companies actively developed their marketing activities using innovative approaches to distribution, pricing, advertising, and customer service. The marketing activity of operators who had previously operated under a state monopoly was significantly lower during this period, and the range of marketing tools was limited by the social burden and regulated tariffs.

3 CUSTOMER ORIENTATION IS THE MAIN GOAL

Under the influence of increasing competition and increasing customer demands for the quality of services, the process of attracting and retaining customers became more complicated, and companies began to refocus on the classic "consumer" marketing concept, in which the focus of attention shifted directly to the consumer of the service. A product will sell successfully if its creation is preceded by a study of market conditions and needs. A service created in accordance with the identified demand, with better consumer properties than a competitor's service, represents an absolute value for the consumer and becomes the key to the successful market activity of the company and the source of its competitive advantages. Focusing on the customer, the ability to meet his needs determines the success of the business.

Within the framework of the consumer concept, the range of marketing tasks has expanded significantly:

study the needs of customers and develop services that meet their requirements;

assessment of market opportunities associated with the emergence of new technologies;

market segmentation, orientation of production and marketing activities to various consumer groups, focusing efforts on finding the most promising market segments;

increase the flexibility of the tariff policy;

expand the range of additional services and improve the quality of service;

the use of various ways to promote services and stimulate sales.

Along with the expansion of marketing activities, its organizational support was changing, the role and place of marketing departments in the management structure were being reviewed in companies, and marketing services began to function in a new format. The successful solution of these tasks helped to increase the efficiency of the company's activities and ensured the stability of its market position.

4 A SOCIALLY ORIENTED APPROACH

The principle of social orientation is an important feature of communication services marketing, which is due to the high social importance of services, the infrastructural nature of the industry serving the population and public production, and the increasing role of telecommunications in modern life. Within the framework of the socially oriented concept, marketing is interpreted as a system that includes service providers, consumers and society as a whole (Lee, N., 2022). Each of the stakeholders has their own interests:

consumers are interested in offering modern, high-quality and affordable services;

the company uses marketing as an effective means of competition and economic growth;

the company is interested in ensuring that the marketing activities of telecommunications companies contribute to the development of the industry, the introduction of new technologies, the expansion of the range of services and forms of information services for the effective functioning of the economy, effective public administration, and improving the quality of life of citizens (Figure 1).

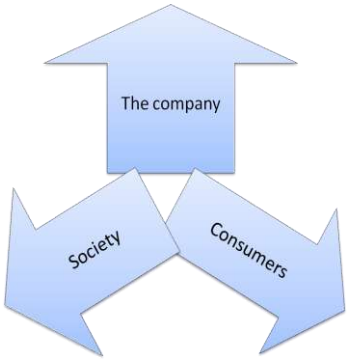

Figure 1: Multidirectional interests of stakeholders.

At the same time, the economic interests of the enterprise collide with the long-term interests of society, limiting the commercial initiative of companies depending on the guidelines of social development and government priorities. The purpose of socially oriented marketing is to harmonize these interests.

5 STRATEGIC APPROACH AND RELATIONSHIP MARKETING

The acceleration of scientific and technological progress in the 21st century, the shortening of the life cycle of technologies and services created on their basis have a great impact on the specifics of the economic situation and the specifics of the telecommunications business. New technologies

open up great opportunities in terms of developing new services, but not all of them are becoming in demand (Kukharenko, E., 2022). The acceleration of scientific and technological progress in the 21st century, the shortening of the life cycle of technologies and services created on their basis have a great impact on the specifics of the economic situation and the specifics of the telecommunications business. New technologies open up great opportunities in terms of developing new services, but not all of them are becoming in demand. Conversely, not all projects that are commercially successful in foreign or regional markets can bring the desired return to a particular company. At the same time, the introduction of innovations requires significant capital investments, the payback of which must be ensured within a reasonable time for the company and the investor (Salutina, T., 2023, Kukharenko, E., 2021).

Strategic marketing involves a forward-looking approach to analyzing market evolution, which makes it possible to identify market segments that are attractive from the point of view of the company's long-term competitive advantages and meet the needs of these segments by developing innovative product concepts that are best adapted to these segments (Kotler, P., 2021). Each management decision should be accompanied by a strategic marketing assessment, which will minimize risks and justify the most effective development trajectory of the company. Strategic marketing tools are designed to adapt consumers to new telecommunications products and increase the value of innovative services by actively generating demand.

Classical marketing is based on the assertion that the selfish interests of individual companies and competition are the driving forces of value creation. Relationship marketing formulates a different thesis: value is created in the process of cooperation and interaction of market entities.

In the telecommunications market, the chain of consumer value creation is increasing, the market model has become noticeably more complex, there are a large number of specialized companies and a variety of interaction schemes between them, so the concept of relationship marketing is becoming very popular. In the process of creating a complex multi-level telecommunications product, depending on the market segment, the efforts of manufacturers of equipment and hardware and software products, operators, system integrators, content creators, service providers, aggregators can be combined.

The relationships of market participants are determined by their interdependence and are aimed at forming long-term sustainable business relationships, therefore, coordination of efforts in the field of marketing research, development and promotion of new high-tech services is required. The end result of partnership marketing is the building of a unique partnership system or marketing business network, within which the competitiveness of each individual participant increases.

6 DIGITAL MARKETING AND INNOVATIVE TOOLS

Digital transformations are being carried out at a high pace, affecting almost all business processes of the company; the range of digital tools and innovative solutions is expanding (Gorodnichev, M., 2019, Kukharenko, E., 2021, Sergeeva, M., 2022).

In a dynamically changing external environment, marketing activities are also undergoing significant transformations. The implementation of marketing activities based on the use of digital information and communication technologies is called digital marketing.

The process of digital transformation of marketing began in the 1990s due to the development of the Internet. Entrepreneurs now have tools such as a website and email.

Telecommunications companies immediately began to consider Websites as universal digital assets, allowing them to host various types of content to attract consumers. Web content, unlike traditional advertising and information materials, has made it possible to provide consumers with more extensive and meaningful information about the services and tariffs provided.

Since the beginning of the new century, operators have been actively developing e-commerce, introducing analytics tools, using social networks to promote services, and introducing mobile marketing technologies.

The introduction of the latest technologies and the transformation of digital marketing is driven by an intensive increase in digital maturity worldwide (Salutina, T., 2021, Kukharenko, E., 2023).

The development of technology has brought a number of innovative solutions to digital marketing, such as artificial intelligence, BigData, augmented and virtual reality (Figure 2).

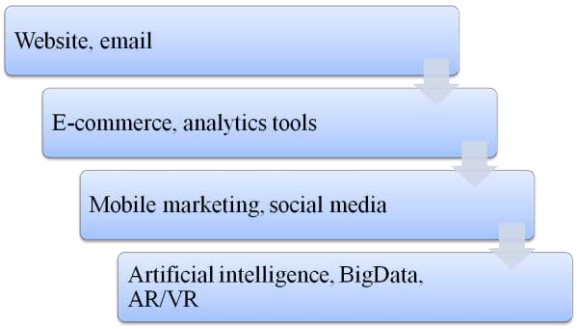

Figure 2: Stages of digitalization of marketing activities.

The introduction of these technologies is the most relevant trend in the marketing of telecommunications services.

7 RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Changes in the market space and economic relations of market participants, the transformation of business models against the background of the emergence of new technologies contribute to the development of marketing theory in relation to new realities. The modern approach to telecommunications marketing is implemented in the concepts of strategic, socially oriented marketing, relationship marketing and digital marketing. When building their marketing policy, telecommunications companies apply an integrated approach, showing flexibility in the selection and application of marketing principles and tools (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The basic principles of the modern marketing concept in telecommunications.

Analyzing the evolution of marketing concepts, it should be noted that fixed and mobile operators, Internet service providers, and IT companies developed in different conditions, so marketing goals and ways to achieve them differed. To form the most complete picture of the development of the industry marketing concept, it is necessary to study marketing strategies in various segments of the telecommunications business.

8 CONCLUSIONS

Digital marketing transformation is an ongoing process influenced by new technologies, changing customer requirements, and the relentless need for companies to remain competitive in a rapidly changing digital landscape. Achieving success in this area requires a clear vision and willingness to embrace change, which is why telecommunications companies need to closely monitor digital innovations and their application practices to meet marketing challenges.

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