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Experiential marketing and building brand communication strategies in social media

Marketing doświadczeń a budowanie strategii komunikacji marki w mediach społecznościowych

The aim of the paper is to characterise the concept of experiential marketing as an idea constituting the basis for building the strategy of brand communication in social media. The paper presents "genetic code" for building such strategy that was "encrypted" in SMART acronym. The deliberations presented in the paper can contribute to building the model in which it is vital to include social media in the process of creation of experiences and desirable emotions associated with them. The paper is prepared on the basis of review of Polish and foreign literature on the subject, observations of economic practice and selected results of authors own research.

Keywords

experiential marketing, social media, marketing communication, brand

Celem artykułu jest scharakteryzowanie koncepcji marketingu doświadczeń jako idei stanowiącej podstawę do budowania strategii komunikacji marki w mediach społecznościowych. Przedstawiono „kod genetyczny” dla budowy takiej strategii, który został zaszyfrowany w akronimie SMART. Zaprezentowane w artykule rozważania mogą stanowić przyczynek do budowy modelu, którego istotą byłoby włączenie mediów społecznościowych do procesu kreowania doświadczeń i związanych z nimi pożądanych emocji. Artykuł został opracowany na podstawie przeglądu krajowej i zagranicznej literatury przedmiotu, obserwacji praktyki gospodarczej i wybranych wyników własnych badań.

Słowa kluczowe

marketing doświadczeń, media społecznościowe, komunikacja marketingowa, marka

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Introduction

It is observed now that the importance of social media as a channel of interactive communication with customers is rapidly growing. At the same time a lot of brands include social media in the process of creation of experiences and desirable emotions associated with them, while believing that emotions will translate into increased liking and attachment to brand (Dziewanowska, Kacprzak, 2013, p. 87). It is, as it seems, a response to dynamically changing situation of the environment, as well as changing nature of the very consumers. They are becoming increasingly more aware and active market participants, sure of their choices, who make purchases to provide themselves with specific, often sophisticated feelings, emotions and experiences (Kiezel, 2010, p. 48).

For brands, they can later become the basis for building relationships and long-term bonds, which in turn will translate into decisions concerning preferences. In this situation contemporary marketing communication with the use of social media as an instrument of market activities is gaining the features of increasingly greater activity and creativity, which significantly increases its significance in marketing strategies of brands. At the same time, defining the grounds for building effective strategy of marketing communication with the use of social media is still a new experience for many brands and a new area of market activity in terms of quality. This situation requires seeking such approaches or models that would support building such a strategy. The main aim of the paper is to identify the elementary pillars that could constitute the fundament for building effective



strategies of brand communication with the use of social media, and at the same time would well correspond with determinants resulting both from dynamically changing environment and the nature of the very consumers. In relation to the aim of the paper formulated in this way, the author proposes the "genetic code" for building such communication strategies. It is encrypted in SMART acronym. In the author's opinion, deliberations presented in the paper can help to build the model, the essence of which would be inclusion of social media in the process of creation of experiences and desirable emotions related to them. They can also constitute the introduction to research of both quantitative and qualitative character in the discussed subject area. The paper is prepared on the basis of the review of Polish and foreign literature on the subject, observations of economic practices and selected results of author's own research.

Experiential marketing — the essence of the concept and the proposal of a new set of instruments

Nowadays we are observing significant changes in the sphere of marketing and its evolution. The process of evolution of marketing comprises both the sphere of marketing concept and its organisational dimension or implementation (Kozielski, 2016, p. 101). Dynamic changes in economic, social or technological environment are driving forces for this process. The changes in economic environment are reflected in growing interest of marketing theoreticians and practitioners in economic models based on gratuitous sharing, exchanging and paid rental of products (sharing economy) or collaborative consumption. On the other hand, changes in social environment result among others in descriptions of concurrently functioning four generations of consumers (Baby Boomers, generations X and Y — the so-called millennials or generation Z), which is increasingly more observable in literature on the subject. At the same time it is often emphasised that each of these generations is interested in different values. However, it seems that changes in the sphere of technological environment have the greatest impact on the process of evolution of marketing. This is proved by many premises. They include, among others, the results of research that show that three quarters of American marketers agree with the statement that marketing has changed in the recent two years more than in the previous 50 years (Kall, 2015, p. 9), or the proposition of change in the spelling of marketing into *markeTing* that aims to emphasise the

significance of information technologies (TI) (Mazurek, 2012, p. 112). It is even said that under the influence of new technologies and IT solutions, marketing is evolving towards MarTech — technologized marketing (Gregor & Kaczorowska-Spychalska, 2018, p. 15). Ph. Kotler et al. (2017, p. 31 and next) indicate that new technologies brought the change in demographic profile of the most influential consumers on market while claiming that it is the so-called YWN segment (youth, women, netizens). At the same time they emphasise that in the era of digital technologies the access to community, bonds and interhuman contacts are more important than financial resources, which is more typical of the YWN segment.

While dynamically changing the environment, the driving forces presented above push the contemporary organisations to seek increasingly more creative and efficient methods of gaining and retaining customers. The emergence of various types of marketing concepts or ideas is the result of the phenomenon. The concept of experiential marketing is one of these concepts. It has a growing group of supporters both among the scientists and practitioners of economic life. Ph. Kotler (2004, pp. 89–90) defines it as designing experiences around products/services and approaches it as the complementation of the traditional offer with strong emotions and entertainment that are worth remembering. Some authors believe that it is not only a trend, but a new emerging paradigm of the marketing of the 21st century (Boguszewicz-Kreft, 2010, pp. 130–140). V. Ramaswamy (2011, pp. 195–196) claims that customer experience, and specifically the experience of value co-creation should be the basis for explanation of the marketing logic. At the same time he formulates the premises for such an approach to marketing, while emphasising among others, that experience comes from interaction, and that the value is the function of co-creation experience for individual market participants as well as of human emotions related to these experiences that are important for them. G. Rosa et al. (2016, p. 36) also perceive experiential marketing as the most innovative approach to the marketing of co-creation of value with consumer, whereas L. Malär et al. (2011, pp. 35–52) indicate experiences with brands as the key integral construct of the brand capital.

The concept of experiential marketing is based on the assumption that creating and providing customers with positive, unique, memorable experiences, additional emotions and feelings that should involve and bind them emotionally are the distinguishing features on the market that enable enterprises to build competitive advantage (Dziewanowska & Kacprzak 2013, p. 89;



Boguszewicz-Kreft, 2013, p. 53). Thereby, experiential marketing significantly goes beyond the traditional formula of classical 4P tools that constitutes the canon of previous marketing knowledge and forces contemporary enterprises to review and modify their strategies and marketing actions through reconfiguring the set of marketing tools towards creation of the ability to generate unique emotions that the customer experiences on sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioural and relational level¹.

Therefore the "new 4P", representing **portals, paths, pulses, people** can be proposed (Gruda & Jakubów, 2016). A new set of marketing instruments emphasises both the significance of changes in technological environment of contemporary companies and the phenomenon related to the shift of considerable part of marketing activity, including activity associated with building customer experiences, to the virtual world associated with these changes. The "new" set of tools in combination with understanding the customer and determining the method of interaction with them can offer greater chance to attain a competitive advantage and become a new research perspective in marketing. Certainly it is a proposition corresponding to new challenges facing marketing and worth intellectual reflection. Characteristic features of the "new" set of marketing instruments is presented in Table 1.

Summing up we should agree with the statement formulated by I. Skowronek (2012, p. 10), that no market entity can avoid the emergence of experiences of their customers, but each can consciously shape the experiences and build relationships based in a greater degree on emotional value. At the same time, the proposed new set of marketing instruments focuses attention on two important aspects:

- firstly, marketing can be viewed not only from the perspective of the classical set of 4P or even 4C tools (customer solution, customer cost, convenience, communication), but also from the perspective of other instruments, so that efficient strategies and marketing programs could be built on their basis;
- secondly, from the marketing point of view, abundance of means of communication in social media actually offers vast possibilities of their application in marketing communication and building customer experiences; however, it should be remembered that while using this multitude of means in the process of creation of efficient strategies and marketing programs, the models of behaviour cannot be transferred uncritically from the so-called traditional market, and thus the use of new set of instruments is necessary.

Table 1. Characteristic features of the "new" set of marketing tools

Name of the instrument	Description
Portals	All contact points of the company (brand) with customer, both virtual, e.g. social media and physical. It is the key instrument of experiential marketing because each contact with the company (brand) is the carrier of experience for customer. Identification of all points of contact is necessary to determine their impact on building customer experience
Paths	The so-called customer paths and application of the concept of "consumer journey map", i.e. description of how they move between points of contact with company (brand). Their recognition is necessary because the knowledge about how the consumer moves, why he changes the points of contact as the carriers of experience enable appropriate actions in the sphere of marketing
Pulses	All operational functions (systems of motivation, organisation, support for marketing processes and processes of management of IT solutions, etc.) that on the basis of the above analyses allow to gain knowledge about "the methods of customers' thinking and acting" better than before (Zaltman, 2008, p. 37), and they ensure proper relationships with customer on each stage of cooperation and involvement
People	Workers, because it is assumed that in the process of continuous changes, especially resulting from implementation of new technological solutions, organisational culture that supports open, creative people enthusiastically approaching all innovative changes is needed. At the same time, the occurrence of this "instrument" in the new set of 4P should emphasise that in the world dominated by new technologies, human factor still remains crucial

Source: author's own case study based on (Gruda & Jakubów, 2016).



Social media as a carrier of experiences of contemporary consumers

Experiential marketing is the concept comprising provision of experiences to consumers in each point of contact with brand (company). Nowadays it is observed that increasingly greater part of marketing activities in which consumer has contact with brand is transferred to virtual space, including social media. Thereby, they are becoming vital carriers of customer experience in a similar or often greater dimension than are products/services with their attributes, sales methods, traditional customer service or communication in traditional media. It seems that one can easily formulate the thesis that for many contemporary consumers social media are becoming a natural channel of communication with brand, a point of contact, and thus the source of their experiences. In the literature on the subject there are many definitions of social media. The definition proposed by M. Kaplan and M. Haenlein (2010, pp. 59–68)² is one of the most widely accepted by both the researchers and practitioners. It describes social media as a set of applications based on technological and ideological Web 2.0 basis that enables creation and exchange of the content created by the users. At the same time it should be said that combining technological aspect and interactivity that result in creation of new content is what is common for most definitions.

Growing interest in social media in terms of creation of customer experiences results from their growing popularity and continuous expansion of their possibilities in affecting companies and customers. This is proved by the results of research conducted by Cumulus Media company among others. It shows that within almost only 60 seconds 174 000 internet users were scrolling Instagram, 481 000 tweets occurred, 4 300 000 films were seen on YouTube, 2 400 000 snaps were sent, and 973 000 users logged in the Facebook (IAB, 2019). At the same time, in 2018 social networks had 3.484 billion users in the world (462.5 million people in Europe), who spent on average over 2 hours using social media during the day, and there were almost 9 accounts in social media per one Internet user (data based on Hootsuite & We Are Social, 2019). What does it mean for brands? Firstly, this data illustrates the potential of social media and show that they have impact on almost each aspect of personal life of contemporary consumers and market activity of companies. A thesis can be formulated with great probability that while seeking contact with brand, increasingly larger number of customers will choose social media regardless of the time of the day and the place of

residence. Additionally, according to Ph. Kotler and K.L. Keller (2013, p. 586), thanks to the speed and topicality of message, social media stimulate innovativeness of companies and give them complete knowledge about consumer needs and desires. This allows to support other communication activities of the company and develop consumer engagement and activity. These and other arguments somehow "demand" from brands to include activities in the sphere of social media in a broad eco-system of their contemporary communication and building customer experiences.

Furthermore, it is worth emphasising that application of social media by companies/brands can be referred to all three management levels (Mazurek, 2016, pp. 24–25):

- operational (e.g. current promotion of brand, ongoing customer service, keeping and maintaining dialogue between enterprise and customers or users);
- tactical (e.g. generating conversion and thus transformation of the user — the Internet user into customer who, on the basis of the content, he had contact with in social media, will be encouraged to perform a specific transaction);
- strategic (the use of social media to change the way of functioning of organisation and encourage innovative look at market relationships between enterprise and customer, e.g. crowdsourcing and crowdfunding activities).

Despite many benefits of inclusion of social media in marketing communication of brands and using them as a carrier of experiences of contemporary consumers, some limitations and related challenges are arising. Firstly it refers to restraining control over communication activities and the process of building positive experiences. At the same time "consumer nature of man" who as a customer is increasingly more demanding, active and realises the power of their opinions is also changing. Furthermore, consumers want to communicate with brand through their favourite social networking platform. Anyway, it often happens that negative experiences associated with for example traditional model of customer service stimulate people to seek the answer in social networks or to describe their experiences in social networks, while writing how a given brand (company) "treated" them during contact (more on the subject: Sadowski, 2013, p. 153 and next). Then communication often changes its character from the dialogue between the brand and "dissatisfied customer" into the so-called "multilog", i.e. actually multilateral communication conducted simultaneously between brand and its consumers and between the very consumers³. This situation causes that efficiency and effectiveness of brand actions in social media result not only from the activity of a given brand but is determined by many



variables independent of the very brand that lie within the activity and attitudes of the users — consumers (Mazurek, 2016, p. 26).

The potential of social media, benefits and limitations related to their use in marketing presented above makes brands attach increasingly greater importance to social media as a point of contact between customer and brand, and at the same time the carrier of positive experiences. Only well designed marketing communication that offers appropriately formulated content can be the source of such positive experiences. It provides customers with information they seek; it can engage them and build relationships based on trust.

Communication with the use of social media designed in this way, while becoming the source of positive experiences of consumers, can significantly contribute to building brand capital at the same time. This is indicated among others, by Christodoulides et al. (2006, pp. 799–825). In their view, constituent constructs comprise for example consumer experience on the Internet measured by the simplicity of navigation and reaching desirable information online, brand procreativity in virtual space measured by evaluation of the level of engagement in the dialogue with consumer and evaluation of the level of taking into account their opinions, emotional relationship, measured by the sense of consumer belonging to the group of brand users, as well as care and understanding from brand, and also trust measured by the level of ensuring privacy of the content and transaction, among others.

Summing up the deliberations, it should be emphasised that social media as a new interactive communication channel open new possibilities for brands, in the sphere of shaping customer experiences. They become for them both an opportunity, while opening many possibilities unknown before, but also a significant challenge because of their features. They demand recognition and understanding of dynamically changing environment and great ability to adapt to new reality.

Genetic code of contemporary communication of brand/company with the use of social media versus the concept of experiential marketing

Social media significantly change the way and character of contemporary marketing communication. Firstly, it is no longer only a unilateral process of sending information from

brand towards the present and potential buyers, but it can be interpreted as "constructive dialogue" continuously conducted with the use of achievements of modern technologies. This dialogue also, or maybe mainly, consists in collecting information "coming from the market". It can be stated that through social media modern brands have become some kind of aggregator (Weber, 2011, p. 22) that gathers new ideas, research and opinions around itself, an active participant and creator of online communities, moderator of consumer discussion about brand and thanks to this, a source of newer and newer experiences for users.

In this situation, contemporary marketing communication with the use of social media is gaining the features of increasingly greater activity and creativity as an instrument of market activities. This significantly increases its importance in marketing strategies of brands. At the same time, determination of grounds for building efficient strategy of marketing communication with the use of social media is still a new experience for many brands. This situation requires seeking such approaches and models that would support building of such a strategy and at the same time would correspond well with determinants resulting from dynamically changing environment. SMART formula presented in Table 2 can be the response to such a search for an answer. The author defines it as a "genetic code" of brand communication with the use of social media. When the notion of "genetic code" is used in sciences of management, we usually focus on several most important encrypted features of the discussed phenomenon. Thus it can be said that "genetic code" of modern brand communication with the use of social media is a specific type of "code" for such dedicated strategy, presenting its fundament based on five pillars, i.e. synergy achieved by coherence of the strategy of brand presence in social media with the strategy created in offline space, methodicalness, content attractiveness, reactivity and transposition (compare Table 2).

Research methodology and discussion

Data necessary to evaluate consumers' opinions on individual elements of the genetic code of contemporary brand communication with the use of social media was obtained through the survey with the use of the direct interview technique. The study was conducted from December 2018 until January 2019 by the students of the University of

Table 2. SMART formula as the "genetic code" of the present brand communication with the use of social media

Elements of the "genetic code" of communication	Description
S Synergy	Synergy effect can be achieved through coherence of the strategy of brand presence in social media and the strategy created in offline space
M Methodicalness	Regularity in publishing content — consistently and in compliance with specified principles
A Attractiveness of the content	Attractive and engaging content, building the brand image consistently with the rule stating that "on social media you are what you publish"
R Reactivity	Availability, ensuring that the consumers will immediately obtain the answer to the questions, findings or suggestions related to brand
T Transposition	Ability to generate, recognise and implement ideas coming from consumers and transmitted via social media

S o u r c e: author's own case study.

Economics in Katowice within the "Marketing research" course. Due to growing significance of the commercial potential of social media as the channel of marketing communication and interaction with customers, the main purpose of the study was to identify the way in which the use of social media in brand marketing communication is perceived by contemporary consumers. The research tool applied in the study was a review questionnaire that was composed of 16 questions in the main part and three questions about respondents' particulars (sex, age, education). The main part of the questionnaire included general and relevant part. The purpose of the general part was to identify the respondents' profile in terms of the use of social media, also including the determination of the rate of respondents who declared the fact of non-using social media and recognition of the reasons for the lack of activity in social media. The relevant part was aimed only at the respondents who declared in the research that they used social media. It included questions referring to their interactions and experiences with brands that apply social media in the process of marketing communication with them.

The research questionnaire was addressed at people born in four different periods that were determined at the beginning of the research (they were respondents born after 2000 as representing the so-called generation Z, born in 1980–1999, the so-called generation Y, born in 1965–1979, the so-called generation X and born in 1946–1964, the so-called Baby boomer generation). Non-probability sample selection was applied. At the same time, considering the results of COBS research (Felisiak, 2018) according to which mainly age determines online presence and presence in social networks, as

well as the style of using the Internet (presence in social media is definitely more often than on average declared by Internet users who are less than 35 years old, whereas explicitly less frequently by people aged 55 and more) it was stated that the most represented group in the sample should include respondents who are representatives of generation Z and generation Y. The Internet and social media are in a way for them a natural space of learning, searching for and collecting information, a natural method of communication and building experiences in the sphere of broadly perceived social interactions, including interactions with brands (Tapscott, 2010, p. 50). There were 709 respondents in the study, including 400 women (56.4%) and 309 men (43.6%). According to adopted assumptions people representing the so-called generation Z and generation Y were prevailing in the sample (in total 63.9%). The respondents born in 1965–1979 — the so-called generation X represented 21.0%, and those born in 1946–1964, the so-called baby boomers represented 15.1%. Due to the fact that 16.2% respondents declared that they did not use social media (they were people born mainly in 1946–1964 and in 1965–1979), the questions from the relevant part of the questionnaire (the sample of 585 respondents in total), were actually aimed at people representing generation Y and Z.

The author realises that the method of sample selection does not entitle to perceive the studied sample as representative, and restraints the possibility to formulate statistical conclusions and generalise results for the entire population. However, it seems that the research results can constitute an important source of information in the sphere of discussed subject area and

furthermore they allow for analyses in both holistic approach and in comparative approach to specific generations.

Table 3 shows results of research on significance of specific elements of the genetic code of contemporary brand communication with the use of social media in consumers' opinions who previously declared that they used social media and actively observed brands in them. The respondents were asked to order provided five vital, identified determinants of brand activity (component parts of "genetic code") to build its desirable image in social media from 1 to 5 in such a way that the determinant that according to the respondent was the most significant was ranked as 1 and the determinant that is the least important was ranked as 5. In the next stage of the research procedures the places indicated by respondents were attributed the scale according to the following rule: rank no 1 — 5 points, rank no 2 — 4 points, and so on... rank no 5 — 1 point. The last stage was adding the points obtained by specific component parts and development of ordinal scale of preferences based on obtained results.

Research results presented in table 3 allowed to create the following series of preferences: Attractiveness of the content → Synergy → Reactivity → Methodicalness → Transposition. In

can be applied by brands. They are content of the following character (<http://www.smartinsights.com/content-management/content-marketing-strategy/the-content-marketingmatrix-new-infographic>, accessed 1.07.2019):

- Entertaining, referring to emotions. Their task is to build the brand awareness among consumers. They include knowledge quizzes on lifestyle types, contests, games, films with the brand mark, among others.
- Inspirational, referring to emotions. They aim at affecting the sale of products/services. They comprise widgets, content supported by the image of famous people (celebrities), opinions of other people expressed in forums, discussion groups, opinions under products and also rankings that compare products with others.
- Educational, referring to rational premises. Their task is to build the brand awareness. They include papers, e-books, infographics, press releases, all types of reports, including reports on trends, videos with manuals.
- Convincing, referring to the reasons of rational consumers. Their task is to influence buying decisions. They include demo materials in the form of videos, checklists, webinars (seminars conducted on the Internet), examples of good business practices, calculators, spreadsheets.

Table 3. Final results of research on significance of component elements of "genetic code" of contemporary brand communication with the use of social media based on respondents' opinion

Category of brand/company actions	Number of indications					Number of points
	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	
Synergy	142	103	125	116	99	1828
Methodicalness	114	102	137	110	122	1731
Attractiveness of the content	133	141	122	110	79	1894
Reactivity	119	138	107	125	96	1814
Transposition	77	101	94	124	189	1508

S o u r c e: author's own case study.

the author's opinion it can facilitate preparation and implementation of an effective program of social media application in brand communication.

It shows that **attractiveness of the content** is the key element of "genetic code" of contemporary brand communication with the use of social media. A very interesting "mathematical" definition of content attractiveness proposed by the head of NewsCred strategy should be mentioned here. It says that it is a common part of content "produced" by brands and the content that consumers need. At the same time to prepare attractive content, brand can apply the so-called Content Marketing Matrix. The matrix illustrates four types of content that

Synergy obtained through implementation of the strategy of coherence of the brand presence in social media with the strategy created in offline space is the next important component in respondents' opinion. This component can be considered the key to efficient and effective brand communication and building customer experiences, especially in the period of systematically growing number of available communication channels that consumers use, and in which they can contact brands and build their own experiences. The skill of implementation of coherence in the strategy of brand presence in social media with the strategy created in offline space proves the ability of the



brand to approach the issue in a broad holistic way. Providing the consumers with coherent brand message in their natural environment should be the task of each brand. The matrix of media application that should perform a key and/or complementary role on specific stages of "consumer journey" from the stage of building brand awareness, engagement, active consideration, purchase, consumption, building relationships and promotion proposed by A. Young (2010, p. 157) could be a useful tool for implementation of this component in the strategy of communication.

Reactivity was in the next place in the series of preferences. This element indicates the fact that social media represent the space of immediate reaction — consumers in incredibly short time can produce posts that are a reaction, an effect of an experience with brand and in the same way they expect an immediate reaction from brand. Reaction time can therefore be considered one of important determinants of communication success in social media. Sotrender's research of 2017 shows that operators of mobile networks as well as such brands as Player.pl, Idea Bank and ipla can "boast" of reactions on the level 98–100% questions on Facebook. It was also found that the fastest reaction was 174 seconds and belonged to Plus, the first 25 brands/companies from TOP 100 reacted in a shorter time than one hour, whereas the brands that posted comments the fastest included Media Expert (2 minutes 23 seconds), Plus (2.59 minute) and T-Mobile (3.38 minute). At the same time the research shows that 42% consumers expect a response within 30 minutes and 42% within an hour (results of research based on presentation of J. Zając during Akademia Marketingu [Marketing Academy], Krakow 8–9.11.2017).

Methodicalness is the next component of contemporary brand communication with the use of social media in the "ranking". In fact, each brand is aware that they cannot fully control the process of marketing communication and build only positive experiences among their consumers in social media, but they can actively participate in exchange of opinions and develop discussion with a thread introduced by them, etc. This represents the necessity to prepare a well-developed plan of the brand presence and communication, comprising the rules of social media monitoring, to publish content that is interesting for users, to engage the users in further promotion of specific messages, to measure the effectiveness of actions, consistency, etc. among others. Such "methodical" behaviour allows the brand to build an expert position in a specific time, and this in turn increases consumer trust in brand. Methodicalness also represents the necessity to care about the language of communication adjusted to the target group, development of visual form of posts and the rules of using hashtags, etc. among others.

Transposition, i.e. the brand ability to generate, recognise and implement the ideas coming from consumers and communicated via social media was attributed the least significance on the scale of preferences. The lowest position of transposition as a component of "genetic code" of contemporary brand communication with the use of social media in respondents' opinions can prove that consumers are not likely to choose this type of experiences. This is because they demand from them an activity that is greater than average. Maybe it would be a good idea to identify what would encourage consumers to engage more in co-creation of brand marketing offer and greater activity. Certainly, the reasons for consumers' involvement in co-creation of brand offer will be diversified in such research (for example money bonus, chance for employment, valuable reward, participation in a play, own satisfaction and the wish to present their skills and creativity among others), nevertheless, it will allow the brands to design the processes in companies so that they will be able to benefit from knowledge and experiences of consumers and engage them in market operations of brand. This is a challenge to many brands, nevertheless we can provide many examples of brands, for example Lego, Dell, Procter & Gamble, Sony, Starbucks and Unilever (Gouillart & Ramaswamy, 2011), that implement effective efforts to engage customers more while offering them the possibilities of building experiences in the process of co-creation of a given brand value and real impact on what the brand will offer and how it will change. It should be emphasised that the significance of this component will be growing because it can generate many new experiences for customers, not only comprising submission of ideas of a new product or modifications of existing products, but also creation of new kinds of creative content concerning brand, spending time with brand in an active way, activity in the role of "brand spokesman" or participation in development of brand promotional and pricing strategies, etc.

Conclusions

Social media significantly expand the scope of possibilities for brand operational activity and impact on customers. Thus brand communication and building customer experiences will be regularly transferred to social media that overcome traditional forms of communication with their promptness. Furthermore, they are becoming the source of many positive experiences. This allows brands to build competitive advantage not only on the basis of functional features of products/services, but firstly on the basis of creation and provision of positive, unique memorable experiences and emotions to consumers, which can engage and emotionally attach customers



to brands. Additionally, while being an interactive space for consumers, social media fulfil two key roles (<http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/handel/wiadomosci/ekspert-w-strategiach-komunikacji-sieci-handlowych-social-media-pelnia-dwie-wazne-role,153044.html>, accessed 1.07.2019):

- Firstly, they allow brands to communicate own, practical content in each place where consumers are found (YouTube, FB, Instagram, etc.), while becoming in a way their "everyday companion". Additionally, this communication can be complemented with influencers whose task is to authenticate the practical content of communication.
- Secondly, they allow brands to communicate offers, promotions and discounts while

enhancing buying awareness of consumers and their ability to evaluate the price attractiveness properly. Satisfaction that is a result of acting like the "bargain hunter" is related for many of them not only to utilitarian but also emotional benefits that are then often shared with friends.

In such situation the importance of social media in brand communication strategies is significantly growing. Although social media generate challenges to brands, they clearly increase communication abilities of companies and they become an important source of customer experiences. The author believes that deliberations presented in the paper will contribute to further research on discussed area of both quantitative and qualitative character.

Endnotes

¹ Indicated five areas of experiences represent the typology of experiences broadly applied in the literature on the subject that refers to Schmitt's modular approach (more on the subject: Kacprzak, 2017, p. 42 and next).

² General approval in the literature on the subject for the proposed definition of social media is proved at least by the number of citations of the paper that include the definition (p. 61) — according to Google Scholar on 1.07.2019, there were 15 607 of them.

³ Here the issue of occurrence of the so called Streisand effect should be indicated. It is the phenomenon of censoring and deleting some posts with claims, uncomfortable questions or negative opinions by brands. The research shows that such actions of brands bring the opposite effect and the content is disseminated among a wide group of people for example through the use of the so-called mirrors or through peer-to-peer networks (<http://www.i-slovník.pl>, accessed 1.07.2019).

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