

MARKETING IN THE ERA OF CRISES AND INSTABILITY: STRATEGIES FOR ADAPTATION UNDER UNPREDICTABLE CONDITIONS

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Abstract: The intensification of economic relations under the current circumstances is combined with the tendency of crisis phenomena and conditions of instability. This requires fundamentally new approaches to the formation of marketing strategies. The article aims to analyse anti-crisis marketing strategies as an adaptive mechanism in the face of unforeseen conditions in terms of the sports business. The study was conducted to using general scientific methods: analysis, synthesis, generalisation, specification, induction, deduction, and abstraction. During the study, the authors investigated the main aspects of the formation of an anti-crisis marketing strategy in times of instability in the concept of sports industry development. They analysed the classification of anti-crisis marketing strategic directions. The article highlighted the main strategy of crisis management in times of sports market uncertainty. The specifics of modern marketing strategic decisions in terms of sports services and products are considered to level the impact of unstable conditions. The authors have substantiated the potential for improving the mechanism of anti-crisis management and marketing in today's unpredictable multifactorial conditions of economic activity. Also, they identified the need to enhance the mechanism of anti-crisis marketing as one of the priority components of the effective management system in times of instability. The author proposed a model of an anti-crisis strategy in the face of unpredictable conditions, specified local techniques, and a mechanism for tactics of its implementation. Such a model is a mutually consistent synergistic system of strategies, methodological support, and practical tools. The study proves that anti-crisis marketing strategies in the sports industry facing unpredictability should be focused on dynamic development, adaptation to new conditions of the sports business, and implementation of new solutions in sports products and services. The practical significance of the research results is seen in the possibility of their application for developing or optimising anti-crisis marketing strategies in the system of economic activity management in the face of uncertainty and crises.

Keywords: marketing information systems, anti-crisis management, optimization, strategy, effective development, changes, sports business, football industry, sports products and services, sports market strategy.

1 Introduction

The effectiveness of modern market players today is determined by a complex of marketing measures within the framework of forming a purposeful strategy to overcome the influence and consequences of crisis phenomena and conditions of instability. Such a conceptual basis ensures timely analysis of opportunities to optimize some aspects of the marketing system to obtain quality and timely information and effectively promote goods and services, including in the sports industry. The relevance of studying the theoretical aspects of forming a marketing model in the sports business, in the context of instability and crisis phenomena, is beyond doubt today. The outlined model should consider the specifics of positioning of sports products and services in the sectoral market and the priority dynamics of marketing tools depending on changes in demand.

The formulation of a marketing strategy requires a timely and objective assessment of market dynamics to search for adaptation opportunities with the existing resource potential. It underscores the relevance of developing crisis marketing approaches within the enterprise management system aimed at intensifying activity effectiveness, forming effective adaptation solutions, and gaining market advantage through the dynamic application of marketing tools.

Numerous current publications address the formation and improvement of marketing strategies in crisis and unstable conditions. Some modern scholars (Olinyk et al., 2020; Bahorka et al., 2022) explore the transformation features of enterprise crisis marketing strategies in the context of global digitization. The studies of several researchers (Bahorka et al., 2021; Yepifanova, 2021) reflect the issue of enterprise marketing strategy formation aimed at preventing the impact of uncertainty factors in economic activities. Other scholars (Melnichenko, 2023; Zemko, 2021) note that amidst political, economic, and financial instability, research into the mechanisms of crisis emergence and prevention, as well as their consequences' elimination, gains special significance through the development of preventive marketing crisis strategic decisions.

The comprehensive issues of crisis globalization processes, necessitating the development of corresponding marketing strategies for overcoming them, are thoroughly examined in the studies of certain contemporary researchers (Ruda et al., 2023; Koval, 2022). Certain aspects of marketing's role transformation as a specific resource in management economic systems are reflected in the works of leading researchers in this field (Bocharova & Tupitska, 2023). They emphasize that the concept of crisis marketing continually evolves in response to the dynamics of external and internal influencing factors, creating conditions for business competitiveness development (Severyn & Solntsev, 2020). However, the development issues of crisis marketing strategy in the era of uncertainty and economic crisis processes are discussed by scholars in a selective format. It remains a relatively new and dynamic concept that requires further scientific consideration. Additionally, attention is needed to form practical algorithms of strategic marketing technologies in developing corresponding management decisions to mitigate the impact of crisis and instability. This study aims to analytically justify adaptive crisis marketing strategies as an effective mechanism for overcoming the influence of unforeseen conditions.

2 Literature Review

The works of Ukrainian and foreign scholars form the theoretical and methodological foundation for developing approaches to anti-crisis marketing. Many researchers focus on the issues of integrating marketing technologies into management processes in conditions of uncertainty and crises.

The development of anti-crisis marketing strategies during unstable economic, social, and political conditions has become highly relevant in modern scientific circles, particularly due to the martial law in Ukraine, which has caused chaos and destabilization. Most of the studies by Ukrainian scholars (Sadoviak et al., 2023) are mainly dedicated to methodological and technical aspects of implementing crisis marketing, classification of its mechanisms, and description of its tools. Meanwhile, the scientific contributions of foreign authors (Wang, 2021; Grewal et al., 2020) have an obvious advantage. They propose a comprehensive practical approach covering technical aspects, analytics, and evaluation from the standpoint of maintaining market efficiency.

When examining the role of marketing crisis systems in modern management strategies, the scholars (Bahorka et al., 2022) argue for the potency and multifaceted impact of targeted innovative tools on stabilizing business processes and positioning companies in the market. Scholars (Özoğlu et al., 2020; Sun et al., 2020) emphasize the relevance of anti-crisis marketing in promoting goods and services amidst severe crisis phenomena. Meanwhile, some researchers (Verma et al., 2021) focus on analyzing successful experiences of marketing digitization.

In the publications of several scholars (Goodell et al., 2020), the idea that contemporary anti-crisis marketing strategies provide maximum opportunities for effective promotion of goods and services in the market while also offering functionality for preventive protection is traced. According to some scholars (Alzoubi et al., 2022), the consequences of the global pandemic have accelerated transformational changes. Today, enterprises that ignore anti-crisis business transformation are at risk of losing significant opportunities.

The issue of implementing effective anti-crisis marketing strategies in the sports industry is addressed in research works by several scholars (Foster et al., 2020; Ruihley et al., 2020). At the same time, recently, studies on the marketing aspects of football clubs, ways to promote the brand in the sports industry, and adaptive strategies for developing the sports business in conditions of instability and crisis has become more relevant (Hammerschmidt et al., 2021).

Some scholars (Peñalba-Aguirrezabalaga et al., 2020) also thoroughly describe basic approaches to the implementation of strategic anti-crisis marketing tools by companies and their effectiveness in promoting goods and services in the market. However, despite acknowledging the scientific importance of the works of contemporary researchers, the relevance of issues related to the practical implementation of anti-crisis tools into marketing strategies and the identification of their impact levels and vectors on economic activity remains unresolved. There are still unanswered questions regarding the formation of a universal strategic marketing concept capable of promptly responding to dynamic market changes and the relentless development of digitalization. These circumstances necessitate further scientific research in the field, deepening and detailing it.

3 Methods that have been applied

The methodological framework for the study was based on a number of general scientific and special methods of cognition. These methods include abstract and logical, functional and structural analysis, synthesis, generalization, specification, induction, deduction, and theoretical modeling. A comprehensive systematic approach was applied during the research. It allowed us to study the research object as a system in a set of interconnections and interdependencies.

The methods of various types of analysis and synthesis were used to identify the development factors of the studied object, its defining functional elements, and transformational capabilities in relation to modern marketing strategies. The induction method was used during the implementation of a predictive analysis of the expected effectiveness of anti-crisis marketing strategies. By means of the method of abstraction, the conceptual framework of the management paradigm integrity as a structural and consequential system of interrelations was formed. The method of generalization was employed at the stage of forming the priority directions for optimizing the marketing strategy in the face of uncertainty and crises.

4 Research results

Today, anti-crisis marketing is considered to be a modern marketing concept aimed at maintaining customer loyalty and stimulating economic performance in an era of socio-economic crisis and social instability. This approach involves the development of specific strategies that take into account both the problems of the crisis and the opportunities that arise against its background. At the same time, anti-crisis marketing strategies include both short-term and long-term solutions. They include adjustments to pricing and communication schemes, as well as investment potential for the digitalization of marketing processes.

Anti-crisis marketing is an active component of the anti-crisis management system that helps businesses adapt to changing market conditions, maintains customer loyalty, and stimulates economic efficiency during a crisis. The features of anti-crisis

management that have the most significant impact on the formation of marketing strategies include:

- mobility in terms of implementing anti-crisis measures and an innovative approach to their formation;
- focus on preventive protection and early diagnosis of the consequences of crisis phenomena;
- an effective system of monitoring and control over the implementation of anti-crisis plans and programs.

Scientific approaches to identifying the functionality and potential capabilities of crisis management are a necessary step in shaping the ability of market participants to overcome crises. Research and analysis of marketing aspects in the era of crises and instability contribute to the disclosure of the basic principles and strategies underlying it. The components of the mechanism for optimizing anti-crisis marketing synergize the need to adapt and improve the internal structure, financial processes, and strategies for interacting with the external environment. The implementation of effective methods and tools of the strategy for leveling the consequences of crisis and instability allows for the effective management of crises, prevention of their negative consequences, and ensuring the stability of market functioning.

Anti-crisis marketing strategies are formed from a certain set of algorithmic actions and contingency programs. Based on the ratio of the potential of different components of the anti-crisis marketing strategy, in practice, there are preliminary structuring strategies, operationally urgent, phased, or comprehensive. The spectrum of influence and forecast of the development of crisis factors and conditions of instability determines the priority of strategy choice.

The process of developing and implementing effective anti-crisis marketing methods as a component of situational management involves the formation of non-standard solutions with the use of innovative methods. The current crisis realities in Ukraine require rapid information analysis on the impact of negative factors, prompt decision-making, and the use of special anti-crisis tools and technologies to ensure further effective functioning. At the same time, the process of selecting a methodology for overcoming the consequences of crisis phenomena and preventive protection against them requires minimizing potential financial and image losses of the enterprise.

In times of stability, the main goal of the anti-crisis marketing strategy is to monitor the situation of the enterprise, forecast possible risks, and develop effective preventive measures. At the same time, in case of unforeseen conditions and the impact of crisis phenomena, the marketing system should ensure the effective implementation of countermeasures. This includes a thorough diagnosis of the situation, the development of an effective plan of remedial measures, the distribution of responsibilities, and control over their implementation. In addition, this strategy should provide for the analysis of wrong decisions and the development of a mechanism for preventing their occurrence and minimizing their negative impact.

It should be noted that an effective anti-crisis marketing strategy is represented by the paradigm of convergence of effective means and approaches that are organically integrated into the concept of stable functioning.

The anti-crisis marketing strategy should have significant adaptive capabilities to the market dynamics and socio-economic, political, and demographic environment. Traditionally, the anti-crisis marketing strategy involves identifying the level of influence of the uncertainty factor and potential risks of influential crisis phenomena. Marketing strategies are particularly vulnerable when businesses are mainly focused on short-term results, sometimes only aiming to survive. For this reason, during a recession, it is essential not to forget about the priorities of anti-crisis marketing, which will help avoid any mistakes. At the same time, during a crisis, more attention and

resources should be directed to marketing activities in order to boost turnover at the enterprise.

Sports marketing is a specialized field within the socio-cultural services sector that encompasses organized forms of engaging in sports with various goals, as well as activities related to their provision. The effectiveness of implementing a marketing strategy in sports depends on the degree of correspondence to the market demands for sports goods and services, the dynamics of the sports industry's development, and its level of adaptability to crises and economic environment instability.

Subordinate to the general conceptual foundations of anti-crisis marketing, the sphere of sports business development requires ensuring operation within a constant dynamic flow of unstable economic conditions and solving a range of specific tasks. Among these, the most significant are establishing a stable demand for sports goods and services, strategic promotion of the athlete's, coach's, or sports club's brand aimed at creating a sustainable demand, and establishing an optimal system of marketing communications to satisfy the goals of subject-object interaction in the sports industry.

The formation of an anti-crisis marketing strategy is seen as a crucial stage of the management paradigm in an unstable environment. The assimilation of anti-crisis tools allows the company to get out of a problematic situation with minimal losses in the shortest possible time. A marketing strategy during instability and crisis contains a number of functional components, including:

- a comprehensive analysis of the performance and dynamics of economic activity;
- identification of factors that deepen the consequences of crisis phenomena;
- forecasting, monitoring, and evaluation of the internal potential of the business entity to localize and offset the effects of crises.

The era of instability and crisis imposes specific requirements on marketing strategies. Today, in order to stay in the communication flow, it is necessary to focus on current needs and deliver a quality product in a shorter time. In addition, the value of a project often depends on the level of creativity. For this reason, it is essential to generate relevant ideas for the current moment and implement them within time constraints. Relevant and high-quality communication, regardless of the duration and severity of the crisis, is seen as the driving force behind any marketing strategy. Obviously, marketing strategies for adaptation to unforeseen conditions are characterized by some specific features (Figure 1).

Based on Figure 1, it is worth noting that the customer base does not immediately feel the crisis from a financial perspective. During the financial crisis, society focuses more on the relevance of costs. The anti-crisis marketing strategy makes it possible to adapt the participant's potential according to the specifics of differentiated segments. Before developing an anti-crisis marketing strategy, it is necessary to understand the essence of the main processes that need to be taken into account during a crisis, as well as have the appropriate tools to implement the optimal algorithm for implementing the strategy. In general, the latter has the form of specific sequential actions with a meaningful and targeted load and consists of certain stages (Figure 2).

An effective marketing strategy during a crisis and instability of the socio-economic and political environment should provide for a predictive response to the dynamics of the market environment, in particular, by identifying relevant segments of the market environment. During periods of instability, anti-crisis marketing is seen as an effective way to turn the negative aspects of a recession to the benefit of the market participants.



Figure 1. Specifics of marketing strategy in the era of crisis and instability
Source: author's elaboration

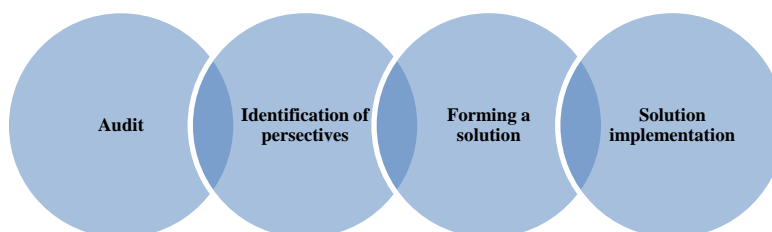


Figure 2. Algorithm for developing an anti-crisis marketing strategy in an unstable environment
Source: author's elaboration

5 Discussion

The transformation of the economic potential of a modern market participant requires, first of all, radical dynamics of the marketing model. According to scholars (Rust, R. T., 2020), it involves the effective adaptation of the market object's activities

to the conditions of economic instability. Rust, R. T. believes that promoting a product for a specific demand or consumption variation requires the availability of appropriate established communication processes with the target audience, taking into account the factors of influence of crisis phenomena in society. We completely agree with the author.

According to the results of scientific research by modern scholars (Semeradova, T., & Weinlich, P., 2020), the dynamic adaptation of traditional marketing algorithms based on digital process optimization, ensuring effective communication, and attracting the capabilities of artificial intelligence technologies are necessary components of forming and improving anti-crisis marketing strategies to create competitive advantages in the market within challenging business conditions. At the same time, Semeradova, T., & Weinlich, P. argue that the use of functional chatbots, mobile applications, and media products for advertising and analytical purposes are promising means of increasing the efficiency of promoting goods and services in the market in the context of reducing advertising costs during the crisis. As a result, such a trend should be addressed.

Some scholars (Benbya, H., Nan, N., Tanriverdi, H., & Yoo, Y., 2020) claim that visualization is an essential requirement for modern marketing processes, which guarantees efficiency and versatility for a broad customer audience. According to them, today, there is a growing need to optimize information systems by introducing integrated software.

Chylinski, M., Heller, J., Hilken, T., Keeling, D. I., Mahr, D., & de Ruyter, K. (2020) argue that the effectiveness of a strategy for promoting services or goods in the market in fierce competition, with falling demand due to crisis phenomena, depends on the implementation of an integrated process for managing various forms of interaction. At the same time, as scientists emphasize, information modeling is an analytical and effective tool for processing large amounts of information. Their conclusions are synergistic with the results of the current study. They prove that modern anti-crisis marketing systems should ensure coordinated data management, automation of information exchange operations, timely response to demand dynamics, and prompt marketing strategy adaptation to new market conditions.

Following the preceding results, some modern scholars (Kalaighnam, K., Tuli, K. R., Kushwaha, T., Lee, L., & Gal, D., 2021) formulate the main requirements for the expected effectiveness of the anti-crisis transformation of the marketing strategy for promoting goods and services in the market. They include the rational use of tangible and intangible resources, minimization of human factor risks in information and analytical systems, availability for investment, reduction of costs for targeted advertising, and coordination of information flows. According to Kalaighnam, K., and colleagues, the result of implementing such a concept is the optimal satisfaction of customer demand and needs while increasing the company's competitiveness despite the factor influence of an unstable socio-economic environment. The conclusions of these authors are similar to the results of the present study.

The modern process of forming an anti-crisis marketing strategy for market players should be focused on optimizing the availability, completeness, and speed of information and forming an appropriate offer with further active promotion using digital tools. The scientists listed above are adamant in this regard. They argue that it is necessary to introduce new interactive tools and expand the scope of communication with different categories of consumers.

The results of scientific research of modern scholars are identical to the conclusions of the current study. This is especially true in terms of actualizing the need to optimize information systems to increase their impact on the formation and improvement of marketing strategies for promoting goods and services in the market in the context of crisis phenomena in society and instability of the socio-economic field. It can be argued that the identified conceptual principles are the basic vectors for optimizing the crisis marketing environment.

The main principle of anti-crisis marketing in the context of globalization of crisis phenomena is to provide analytics and monitoring of the market, consumer trends, and the combined impact of the political and socio-economic environment. The

outlined concept makes it possible to respond promptly to changes and adapt key marketing strategies, which is the basis of a successful management paradigm during a crisis.

However, as of today, there are few studies of crisis marketing issues characterized by limited practical developments. Most of the papers are devoted to theoretical aspects of digital transformation, description of algorithms for modeling management processes, and methods for assessing the effectiveness of transformation. There is also a lack of research on the capabilities of artificial intelligence in crisis marketing information systems.

The prospects for further research are seen in the formation of a practical toolkit for crisis marketing in an unstable economic environment and crises in society. This will allow the implementation of an individualized approach to the promotion of goods and services in the market, minimizing the risks of maladaptation to the needs of the final consumer under challenging conditions of functional activity.

6 Conclusions

The sustainability of economic activity in the face of instability and crisis phenomena within the socio-economic environment requires synergizing effective strategic decisions with the ability to quickly adapt to market dynamics in order to improve business processes in a challenging environment. The success of anti-crisis marketing is based on an integrated approach and consideration of specific conditions and peculiarities of the market participant's activities. It helps to form a reliable basis for further development and maintaining a stable position in the market in the face of uncertainty and changes.

During the study, the authors analyzed the potential for optimizing marketing strategies to build competitiveness and effectively promote goods and services in the face of instability and crisis. The study proved that the use of innovative digitalization opportunities in marketing systems can intensify performance and significantly increase the competitiveness of companies in difficult conditions.

As a result of identifying the priorities of anti-crisis marketing, the authors propose a universal algorithm for improving the efficiency of their implementation. The article identified the multifactorial capabilities of modern innovative marketing tools, including:

- optimization of the communication processes quality;
- increase of competitiveness;
- prompt adaptation of supply to the demand dynamics;
- enhancement of the company's investment attractiveness.

The proposed model of anti-crisis marketing strategy reflects an interrelated set of strategic and operational measures that are subject to common goals and objectives.

Anti-crisis marketing strategies in the sports industry are seen as essential for the functioning of the sports market under contemporary conditions of instability and crisis phenomena. Without harnessing their potential, it seems impossible to ensure the realization of the commercialization and communicative-social functions of the sports business.

The study described effective tools for automating marketing processes that help to optimize sales and increase profitability. The authors proposed some priority areas for further research on the subject, including the development of practical functionality for anti-crisis marketing activities.

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