

## CHANGES IN CORPORATE STRATEGIES AND CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CAUSED BY COVID-19 AFFECTING MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND THEIR TOOLS

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This paper is a partial output of the project VEGA 1/0606/21 Change of preferences in consumer shopping behaviour in the context of the dynamics of the development of marketing communication tools.

**Abstract:** The development and trends of the 21st century have significantly influenced marketing and marketing communications of companies. Both marketing and marketing communications are undergoing significant changes, especially depending on the overall development of the economy, market and consumer and the changing strategic goals of companies. Successful companies must adapt to the market, clearly formulate their goals and visions for the future, approach brand building through innovation, imaginative and effective communication, find a way to differentiate them from the competition, ie seek the uniqueness of the offer. These approaches are called "Radical Marketing" or "Reengineering". As a result of the above changes and shifts, we are encountering new trends in 21st century marketing communications, which are also changing consumer behavior and vice versa. Consumer behavior and decision-making is greatly influenced by modern forms of marketing communications. In 2020 came COVID-19 and the global pandemic. The global economy, businesses, the market and the consumer have found themselves in a whole new reality. The reality that has come is and will be. The following months and years will show how reversible or irreversible the current situation is. The aim of the paper is a comprehensive view of current strategies of companies and consumer behavior, the definition of their key changes caused by COVID-19 and outlines the current form of marketing communications and its tools.

**Keywords:** Company, strategy, reengineering, COVID-19, marketing, integrated marketing communications, consumer, consumer behavior, new communication tools

### 1 Introduction

COVID-19, which caused an epidemic in late 2019, has become a global problem. The pandemic of the new coronavirus became a global health threat throughout 2020, with a direct impact not only on the economy but also on other activities of society as a whole. Because the viruses know no borders, the governments of the affected countries had to take tough measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 in both the first wave of the pandemic and the second wave that hit the world in September 2020. Governments and central banks around the world mobilized and took many measures to eliminate the negative economic consequences of the dynamic spread of an infectious disease pandemic. The Czech Republic was no exception, as it gradually closed part of the sectors of the economy and the borders with neighbouring states as part of many restrictive measures. These measures have significantly reduced the economic activity of the economy.

There is not a single company that is not affected with coronavirus-related, either negative or positive. The measures closed thousands of operations and took jobs from a huge number of people. However, it is this situation that has tested and is testing the ability to adapt to new market conditions, or the viability of companies. Consumer behavior is also changing. Companies had to adapt all areas of their business to this situation - a change in communication, other forms of advertising, a change in assortment, a move to websites and others.

According to Forbes magazine, the impact of COVID-19 on marketing is diverse. While some sectors have been hit hard, others have seen huge growth. A very common problem is, for example, the decline in advertising revenue. Although some areas of marketing may be used by a company in need, other associated services are experiencing a positive increase. An example is online education and various courses, which makes sense because a lot of people now spend most of their time in their homes. When such dramatic changes or events occur, it is important to realize that there is always the potential for new opportunities. It is essential that individuals and businesses reconsider their options and adapt, which often leads to greater

efficiency in the long run. Many marketers change the priority given to certain campaigns to take advantage of current conditions. (www.forbes.cz)

The current situation, which affects the market, raises many questions. For example, is it the right time to invest in a brand? Or how to continue with content marketing? A brand is a value, it is, by no means, just a logo or just a campaign. Value is the result of all the activities that a company creates and marketing participates in it, both through communication but also through distribution, pricing, creativity and building / strengthening relationships with customers.

Many successful companies have had to adapt to the market, clearly formulate their goals and visions for the future, approach brand building through innovation, imaginative and effective communication, find a way to differentiate themselves from the competition, ie seek the uniqueness of the offer. According to Hammer and Champy, these approaches are referred to as "Radical Marketing" or "Reengineering" (Hammer and Champy, 2000).

It is not about improving what already exists or making partial changes that leave the basic structures intact. It's not about patching - partial repairs of existing systems to work better. In fact, this means giving up established procedures and looking again at the work that is necessary to create a product or service of the company, respectively. Providing value to the customer. It means asking the question: "What would this company look like if we rebuilt it today - with current knowledge and using today's technology?" Reengineering a company means throwing away old systems and starting over. It includes going back to the beginning and finding better ways to work. In connection with the concept of Reengineering, to characterize the basic influences of the development of society, which bring changes in consumer behavior, bring new opportunities and challenges. These are: development and changes in technology, globalization, deregulation and privatization, customization, growing competition, industry integration, sales network transformation, disintermediation.

In the new economy, marketing shifts to the individual customer and focuses on building positive relationships. It uses new technologies, eg the Internet is an important tool of marketing communication and its growing potential for brand building is increasingly perceived. Another current trend is the public's orientation towards solving social issues. Companies are involved in socially beneficial projects and subsequent information about these activities to differentiate themselves from the competition and to strengthen the value of the brand. (Kotler, Kartajaya, H., Setiawan, 2016)

One transparent definition of marketing is Kotler's definition, which says that marketing means meeting needs with profit. (Kotler, 2007a). Kotler also more comprehensively defines marketing as a continuous process of analysis, planning, implementation and control. Its purpose is to create and maintain long-term relationships with target customers, which allow companies and other entities to achieve set goals (Kotler, 2004). Seth Godin says that marketing is the act of inventing the product, the effort of designing it, the craft of producing it, the art of pricing it, the technique of selling it. (Godin, 2010)

The brand is a frequent motive for research into consumer behavior and shopping. Research into consumer behavior, preferences and decision-making is one of the most dynamic areas of marketing and its development is influenced by both global changes and trends, as well as new research methods. The two most important global trends in consumer behavior are the aging population and the growing financial strength of women. In relation to this phenomenon, the question is how individual product categories will change across the segments with which brands women will age and what will be their

approach to communication messages. The issue of consumer behavior was addressed by Blackwell, Miniard, Engel, 2006., Shiffman, Kaňuk, 2004. who developed many approaches to the study of shopping behavior across segments, such as the generational approach (Musov, 2015)

Most companies generate their profits from long-term customers. It is generally known that on average 80% of a company's profit is generated by loyal customers. In addition, the value of satisfied and truly loyal (including emotionally engaged) customers grows as they transmit positive information to other people (Word of mouth). They can "pre-sell" goods. According to research, an company costs on average six times more to acquire a new customer than to retain an existing one. Customer loyalty is worth ten times the purchase itself. The probability of selling to an existing customer is approximately 70 to 80%, while the probability of selling to a new customer is only 5 - 20%. In practice, however, a large number of companies invest more and more money in acquiring new customers than in retaining existing ones, even though the market in the Czech Republic is relatively small and saturated. Many companies have not yet realized that customer loyalty is becoming an economic necessity. (Bárta, Pátík, Postler, 2009)

In order for a customer to become loyal, it is necessary to create a valuable emotionally based relationship with him. Customers need to know and feel the brand as an experience that helps them fulfill their individual wishes. Due to the ever-changing structure of the market and increasing competition, traders are beginning to be judged on their ability to build and maintain relationships with customers and strengthen their satisfaction and loyalty. According to De Pelsmacker, Geuens and Bergh, loyalty can be gained through a loyalty strategy. This strategy takes two forms. On the one hand, it is a strategy of reward, on the other hand, it is also a strategy of relationship (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van Den Bergh, 2003). The reward strategy strengthens customer loyalty through various benefits, such as loyalty bonus programs (for example, for airline passengers), shopping gifts, coupons, competitions, etc. This strategy is aimed at rational customers. However, it is very easily mimicked by competition and is, by no means, sufficient to maintain loyalty unless linked to a relationship strategy. Relationship strategy means building close relationships with customers based on detailed information that is intelligently applied to provide enjoyable, personalized, special benefits. The relationship-oriented strategy is designed for emotionally oriented customers. This makes it especially suitable for building customer loyalty.

The whole development of marketing communications in the developed economies of the world shows that the classical concept of marketing communication, which placed the greatest emphasis on mass advertising activities, reached its threshold of effectiveness. The dominance of advertising is gradually declining and there is a stronger integration of marketing communications (IMC). The main reasons for the promotion of IMC in recent decades were, among other things, the declining effectiveness of traditional tools, especially advertising (the phenomenon of advertising blindness, reduced trust and oversaturation of this type of communication in some media) and increased competition between media and the use of other well-targeted methods). In recent years, the view of the well-established communication mix, presented by the dominant advertising, has changed. Tiredness by commercials forced marketing managers to apply other tools of the marketing mix more. Marketers had to better understand and take advantage of each tool. Formerly marginal tools direct marketing, sponsorship, event marketing, online marketing are cutting an ever-increasing part of the pie of the marketing mix. Efforts to establish an active and long-term dialogue with the consumer are also becoming a priority. There is a greater fragmentation of the media and the market. Thus, the selectivity and targeting of communication towards different target groups becomes more important.

The American Association of Advertising Agencies uses the definition of IMC which says that it is a marketing communication planning concept that respects the new value created by a comprehensive plan based on understanding the

strategic roles of various communication disciplines such as general advertising, direct contact, sales promotion, and public relations. It combines them to produce maximum, clear and consistent impact (Duncan, Everett, 1993, 2000) IMK has subsequently been addressed by many authors who have shifted it in trends, such as Kotler, Keller, 2007, Kumar, 2008, Kotler, Kartajaya, H., Setiawan, 2016, Prikrylová, J. et al, 2019.

Therefore, if we define IMC as communication received from the customer's point of view, we can say that it is communication where the customer is offered resources, information, tools and media in a way that is valuable to him and gives him a good and quick understanding of the communicated message. We can say that if a customer is approached inconsistently, he is confused and unlikely to make a purchase. He further states that integrated marketing communications is a way of looking at the whole, of which we have seen only a part, such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, purchasing, communication, etc., in a way that everything is perceived by the customer - as a flow of information from one source'. (De Pelsmacker, Geuens, Van Den Bergh, 2003)

Integrated marketing communications are also understood as a comprehensive process involving analysis, planning, implementation and control of all personal and impersonal communication, media, messages and sales support tools, which are focused on a selected target group of customers (Prikrylová et al., 2019). The goal of such a concept is to build a long-term relationship between buyer and seller by including a targeted individual in an interactive or two-way exchange of information. (Blakeman, 2018)

From the above, it can be concluded that nowadays, companies practicing integrated marketing communications try to link all the communication tools they use so that their effect is enhanced and the consumer has formed a strong bond with them.

## 2 Purpose and Methods of Research

The aim of the article is to define key changes in the strategies of companies and consumer behavior depending on COVID-19, which affect the current marketing communications and their tools.

The main research method we use is desk research. We are based on the already mentioned researches of the KANTAR CZ agency. The core of the scientific article is the analysis of the latest researches of the specialized agency KANTAR CZ and the determination of what changes in the strategies of companies and consumer behavior occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is also possible to determine whether these can be considered permanent or temporary and also which factors, on the contrary, remained unchanged, even if their possible changes are discussed. The research part is based on a detailed analysis and synthesis of findings from these researches in order to define key changes in business strategies and consumer behavior as a result of COVID-19 and outline the current form of marketing communications and their tools.

## 3 Results

For the analysis of the findings in the strategies of companies and consumer behavior (consumer and shopping behavior) depending on COVID-19, we will use two specialized research agencies KANTAR CZ, one of which focuses on companies and strategies and the other focuses on consumers and their behavior. Following a synthesis of these findings, we define key changes in companies' strategies and consumer behavior that affect current marketing communications and their tools.

The first research we analyze is focused on companies and their strategies.

KANTAR CZ has been tracking consumer behaviours through the Covid-19 crisis since March 2020, providing impactful insights to its clients. This study is called COVID Barometer. As business sustainability matters, KANTAR CZ decided to

interview its client's to better understand the impact on their businesses and teams, thereby connecting the dots between its client's business strategy and its knowledge of consumer response to COVID-19.

The general indicators about research are: 40 companies in Czech Republic (68% multinational companies, 32% local companies).

The main objectives: foreseen business impact, concerns & scenario changes, public institutions, recovery.

The findings are following:

Over 80% of companies have already reported a negative financial impact on their business. The main concerns for businesses in the Czech Republic at his time are recession and possible financial issues.

In response, companies have had to consider and put into place various actions. They are increasingly focusing on e-commerce capabilities, pivoting their business or adapting production to new products that will fit the changed needs of their customers. They are also focusing on facilitating remote working and ensuring intensified hygiene in the workplace.

Two-thirds expect it will take up to 1 year to reach their pre-crisis performance once the Coronavirus crisis comes to an end. When it comes to financial support measures by the Czech public institutions, only 3% of companies view them as adequate. Three-thirds believe customers' habits and behaviours will change after the crisis and expect activities such as shopping, meetings and education to increasingly shift to online settings.

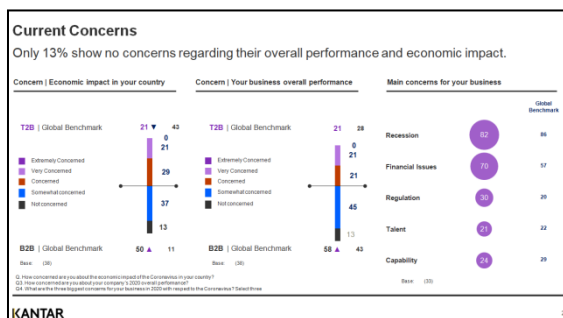
Over 60% perceive the role of Marketing Research as extremely important in strengthening their brand performance.

Global observations:

Globally 90 % of respondents believe there will be a change in expected consumer behaviour in the future. And yet nearly half will spend less on understanding how consumers are changing. Faced with a sudden downturn in their businesses and with concerns for the future, businesses are adopting recessionary behaviours. And given 64% expect their business to recover in 6-12 months; the plan appears to be to save their way of the crisis.

And yet, no recession has ever been accompanied by consumer change of this magnitude.

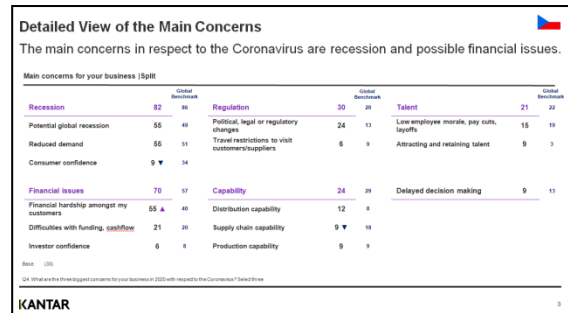
Businesses need to adapt to these changes. But in the face of cost cutting and a significantly constrained business environment, the ability to adapt is severely compromised. While these constraints will lead to more reactive/ responsive ways of working, the pandemic has acted as an accelerant for key trends which businesses can no longer ignore: Brand Purpose, Digital Transformation, and Organisational Performance.



Graph 1: Current concerns  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

One-fifth of companies claim to be very concerned about the economic impact of Coronavirus in the Czech Republic and about their overall performance. Only 13% show no concerns regarding their overall performance and economic impact.

Not only consumers are worried, 9 out of 10 Czech businesses have been impacted by the crisis. 4 out of 10 Czech businesses are concerned about their overall performance...one-fifth of companies claim to be very concerned about their overall performance. The Czech Republic is more positive than global benchmark and also among the most positive ones from CE region.

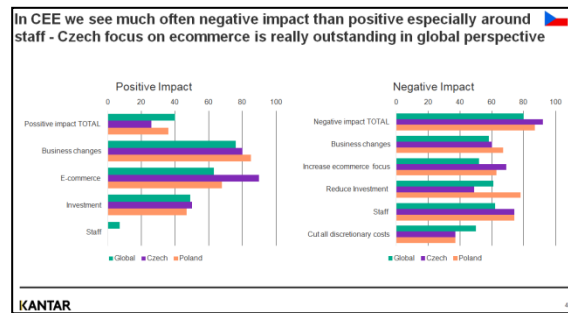


Graph 2: Detailed view of the Main Concerns  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

Main identified concerns are: recession, financial issues, regulation, capability, talent, delayed decision making. 3 out of 4 businesses are negatively impacted by the crisis.

Companies expect the situation to return to normal in the Czech Republic quicker than in other countries. At the same time, two-thirds expect it will take up to 1 year once the Coronavirus crisis ends to reach their pre-crisis performance.

71% of companies expect Global business practices to decrease as a long-term consequence of the crisis.

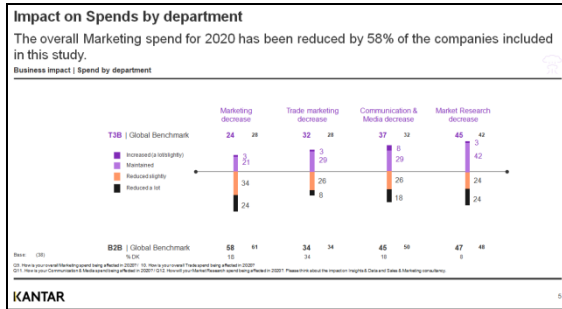


Graph 3: Impact  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

In CEE region we see much often negative impact than positive. Czech focus on ecommerce is really outstanding in global perspective.

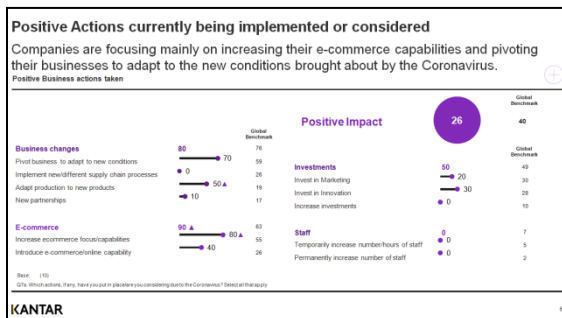
Faced with a sudden downturn and with concerns for the future, businesses are adopting recessionary behaviours. And yet 64% expect their business to recover in 6-12 months.

Czech companies are slightly more optimistic but still plan decrease in comparison with multinational companies. 74% believe there will be a change in expected consumer behaviours in the future. Everyday activities such as shopping, meetings or education are moving to online settings. 58% plan to spend less on marketing and 45% Communication & Media decrease.



Graph 4: Impact on Spends by department  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

The overall Marketing spends for 2020 has been reduced by 58% of the companies included in this study.



Graph 5: Positive actions  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

Companies are focusing mainly on increasing their e-commerce capabilities and pivoting their businesses to adapt to the new conditions brought about by the Coronavirus.

The second research we are now analyzing is focused on consumers and their behavior.

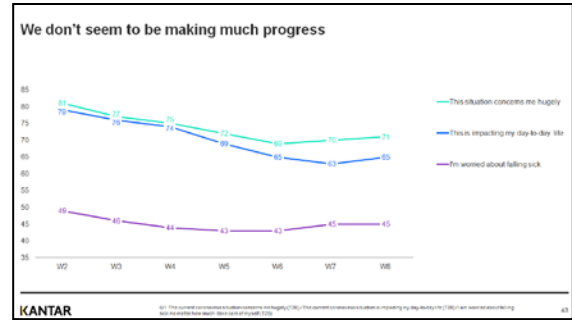
KANTAR CZ research description: Over the past 5 months the COVID19 Barometer has given a global view of how people are coping and changing during the pandemic.

The general indicators about research are: 140.000 interviews done in 6 waves (1<sup>st</sup> wave done end of March 2020).

The main objective of the study is to connect the impact of Covid-19 on changing consumer behaviour and attitudes to the impact on business, especially consumer attitudes, media habits, advertising, purchase behaviour, customer experience, looking forward.

The findings are following:

Consumers globally do not see any progress among the waves. Most of them say that the situation concerns them hugely. The second highest answer is that the situation is impacting the day to day life. The third highest answer is that consumer is worried about falling sick.



Graph 6: The concerns of the consumers due to COVID19.  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

We can find following key indicators which are important for defining the changes of marketing communication targets of companies:

Income impact widely felt 73% (either feel an impact on their income (53%) or expect to (20%)).

Younger age group (18-34) has been hardest hit, with 64% who felt the impact and 19% who expects to.

Employment impact felt 45% (17% reduced hours/ salary, 16% working as normal, but from home, 9% unemployed as a result of the pandemic, 4% furloughed).

A strong need for financial planning 60% of consumers (think the situation demands us to be more proactive about financial planning. This peaked in March 2020 (70%) and has been stable since June.).

Intention to save money intend 35% to focus on the future, by saving money and avoiding non-essential spend. Another 56% intend to find a balance. Only 9% intend to spend their money now.

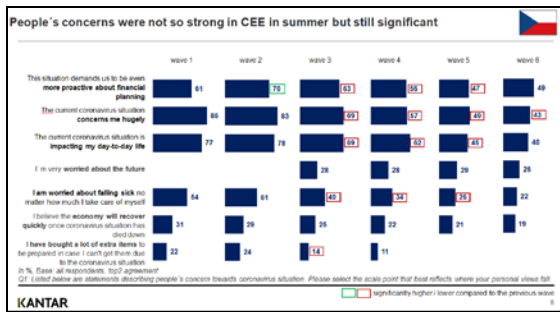
More than 70% of consumers pay attention to prices and 58% pay more attention to products on sale.

Intend to delay or stop considering 42% of people who had plans to make purchase in several consumer durables/service categories are now delaying (27%) or are no longer considering (15%) the purchase.

Travel and automotive sector are hit hard. Respectively 56% (travel) and 53% (automotive) are delaying of no longer considering purchases in the categories.

Nor are we considering new categories 9% had no plan to make a purchase but will now consider any of the products/services. The category most considered is insurance, with 10%.

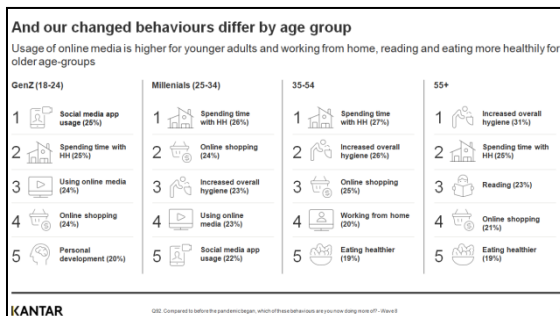
Recent investigation confirms how monetary attitudes have shifted across markets with the effect on new behaviours driven by COVID-19 - personal financial planning, desire to educate oneself about broader financial planning and investing, moderation and judiciousness on the rise, bringing peace of mind and security, life goes on without many excesses, reprioritization of essentials; decrease in consumption joy, finding ways to save in the everyday.



Graph 7: Main concerns due to COVID-19  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

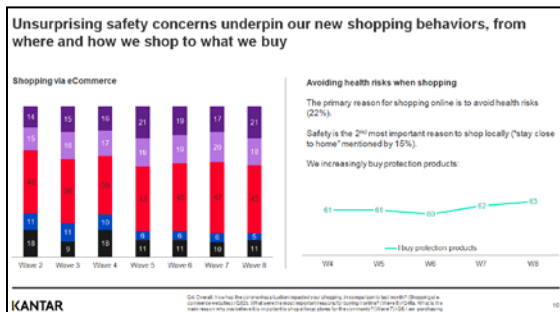
In impact on employment we can see following trends (in order of the frequency of answers): I am working totally as normal (38%), I am working as normal, but from home (11%), I am working reduced hours/reduced salary (9%), I have become unemployed (4%), I have been furloughed (3%), other (35%).

The trends in money spend after lockdown are following (in order of the frequency of answers): I intend to have a balance, by spending some of my money now while also considering the future (58%), I intend to focus on the future, by saving money and avoiding non-essential spend (35%), I intend to spend my money now rather than think about the future, as it is quite uncertain (7%). The importance of health and safety has great influence on customers' behaviour. Here we can see the most important changes by age-groups:

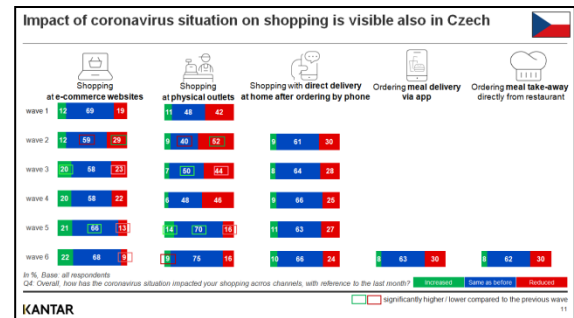


Graph 8: Changes in behaviours by age-groups  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

There is no surprise that defined changes have the influence on new shopping behaviours, from where and how we shop to what we buy:

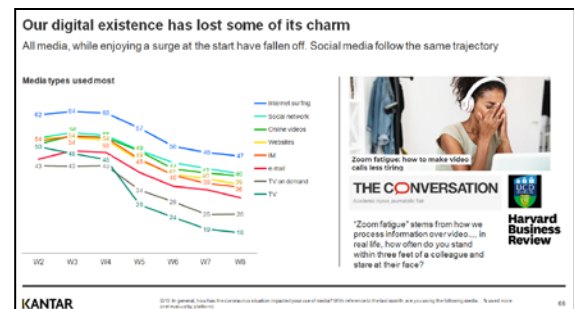


Graph 9: Changes in shopping behaviors  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval



Graph 10: Types of shopping  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

It is very important to know the trends of changes and development in media consumption because it has great influence on marketing communication strategies and tools. The actual trends in media consumption are following:



Graph 11: Media consumption trends  
Source: KANTAR CZ (www.kantar.com), internal materials, published with approval

We anticipate some changes to our habits and behaviours after the crisis. 63% thinks consumer habits and behaviours will change, 22% thinks it won't change and 15% doesn't know. The younger we are, the more likely we're to think consumer habits will change after the crisis (age 18 - 34 69%, age 35 - 43 65%, age 55+ 48%). Expected return to pre-coronavirus pandemic habits. Most of my behaviours will go back to what they were before lockdown 49%, I will go wherever I want to go and I will do whatever I want to do.. 48%.

Localism, a rising trend for a long time, has received a boost during the pandemic. There is increased attention to product origin - 52% pays more attention to the products origin. We are supporting local shops - 69% think local shops are important for the community. Key reasons are: supporting the local economy (28%) and safety concern around staying close to home (15%).

4 Conclusions

Through the analyses of KANTAR researches, we have identified the following key facts in company strategies and consumer behaviour which affect current marketing communications and their tools.

Over 80% of companies have already reported a negative financial impact on their business. The main concerns for businesses in the Czech Republic at his time are recession and possible financial issues. In response, companies have had to consider and put into place various actions. They are increasingly focusing on e-commerce capabilities, pivoting their business or adapting production to new products that will fit the changed needs of their customers. Three-thirds believe customers' habits and behaviours will change after the crisis and expect activities such as shopping, meetings and education to increasingly shift to online settings. Faced with a sudden downturn in their businesses and with concerns for the future,

businesses are adopting recessionary behaviours. 64% expect their business to recover in 6-12 months.

9 out of 10 Czech businesses have been impacted by the crisis. 4 out of 10 Czech businesses are concerned about their overall performance. Main identified concerns are: recession, financial issues, regulation, capability, talent, delayed decision making. Czech companies are slightly more optimistic but still plan decrease in comparison with multinational companies. 74% believe there will be a change in expected consumer behaviours in the future. Everyday activities such as shopping, meetings or education are moving to online settings. 58% plan to spend less on marketing and 45% Communication & Media decrease.

We can find following key indicators which are important for defining the changes of marketing communication targets of companies: A strong need for financial planning 60% of consumers (think the situation demands us to be more proactive about financial planning. This peaked in March 2020 (70%) and has been stable since June.). Intention to save money intend 35% to focus on the future, by saving money and avoiding non-essential spend. Another 56% intend to find a balance. Only 9% intend to spend their money now. More than 70% of consumers pay attention to prices and 58% pay more attention to products on sale. Intend to delay or stop considering 42% of people who had plans to make purchase in several consumer durables/service categories are now delaying (27%) or are no longer considering (15%) the purchase. Nor are we considering new categories 9% had no plan to make a purchase but will now consider any of the products/services. The category most considered is insurance, with 10%. Recent investigation of KANTAR CZ confirms how monetary attitudes have shifted across markets with the effect on new behaviours driven by COVID-19. We anticipate some changes to their habits and behaviours after the crisis. 63% thinks consumer habits and behaviours will change, 22% thinks it won't change and 15% doesn't know. The younger we are, the more likely we're to think consumer habits will change after the crisis (age 18 - 34 69%, age 35 - 43 65%, age 55+ 48%). Localism, a rising trend for a long time, has received a boost during the pandemic. There is increased attention to product origin - 52% pays more attention to the products origin.

These findings and the resulting changes, whether permanent or temporary, affect current marketing communications and their tools.

In general, we talk about the so-called tools of marketing communications of the 21st century. With the overall situation, we encounter a significant increase in online marketing communications tools, where the Internet and online as such occupies an important position in the strategies of companies and consumer behavior. The Internet is a medium that can instantly provide information about the effectiveness of an advertising format, and it is also easy to measure where a company gets the most visitors to its website.

Online marketing tools are chosen according to what goals the company wants to achieve. If it wants to promote the brand, it can use, for example, banner advertising (it is, more suitable for campaigns focused on brand image. Creativity plays an important role here. The importance of banners decreases with the price, but they still have their place, as in the case of targeting viral campaigns (rapid and cheap dissemination of the message is mainly possible by e-mail. In particular, people forward messages that are interesting, funny, parodying or with other motives. Loss of control over the problem can be a problem). brand awareness, uncontrolled dissemination, poorly detectable response or the threat of spamming), community building, microsites, online PR, advergames. When setting a goal that is focused on performance, it is appropriate to use, for example, search engine marketing (divided into two groups: unpaid search results and paid search results. Search engine marketing is an important tool of Internet marketing today. The goal is to ensure the visibility of the site in the advantage is that the company pays only for the brought visitor), e-mailing campaigns, affiliate marketing (this is a tool where there is a

division of income between online merchants who draw attention to each other's offers. For owners online stores are the most cost-effective tool (they pay a commission for realized sales, not only for displaying an advertisement or bringing a visitor).

Other tools used in online marketing are viral marketing and content marketing.

Viral marketing - the advertising message spreads so-called "self": users voluntarily pass it on without further intervention and control by the client or initiator. Creatively, this method is very demanding. The basic feature is therefore usually low cost, but without the possibility of controlling the dissemination, later modification of content, number or other specifications.

Content marketing - content marketing mainly involves creating stories for companies and individual products - these stories are then part of all communication and are a prerequisite for the application of other new trends, such as buzz marketing. This type of company or product strategy is not primarily focused on sales, but to communicate with existing and potential customers. Despite the importance of online marketing, however, the company cannot completely eliminate other tools within its marketing communications mix and focus only on the Internet.

In addition to the already well-known tools of the "classic" communication mix, we currently encounter tools that are based on general market, consumer and technology developments and are further enhanced by COVID-19, where one of the main goals is efficiency. These tools do not replace the traditional ones, but complement and combine them appropriately. It is worth mentioning in particular:

Mobile marketing - mobile marketing is marketing using mobile phones (or their services) and other mobile devices, which can include GPS navigation. It is worth mentioning especially the area of mobile applications and LBS (location based services), which can be very well used for immediate motivation to visit the point of sale and purchase.

Word-of-Mouth marketing - is part of the so-called BUZZ marketing = it is about creating excitement and debates about a topic, brand or product - between consumers and the media. It is a very effective tool without significant investment. In essence, it includes viral marketing, blogs, communities, loyalty programs, and other techniques that support discussions about a particular brand or its products. It can be part of the marketing mix of a completely new brand, but more often we meet it with established and well-known products.

Guerrilla communication - the goal is to attract attention in any way - mostly in a non-traditional way, in the form of hidden cameras or activities on the border of the law or local regulations. It is therefore a style of communication that usually does not use traditional media, or uses them untraditionally. The most common scenario is to strike in an unexpected place in an unexpected way, focus on the selected targets and quickly pull back. Immediate publicity is expected, which will guarantee the maximum effect of the campaign with minimum costs.

Product placement - placement of an advertisement or product in a film or other work. It is suitable for brand advertising, where the promoted product, service or brand forms part of the story. PP is used primarily to increase brand awareness and long-term product visibility.

Neuromarketing - finds differences between the customer's conscious statement and subconscious behavior. Neuromarketing is then the application of this knowledge to any area of marketing: packaging, research and development, marketing communication, creation of communication concepts, etc.

One of very significant examples how IMC reflects also technological development is artificial intelligence. These applications perform repetitive, structured tasks that require

relatively low levels of intelligence. They're designed to follow a set of rules or execute a predetermined sequence of operations based on a given input, but they can't handle complex problems such as nuanced customer requests. An example would be a system that automatically sends a welcome email to each new customer. Simpler chatbots, such as those available through Facebook Messenger and other social media providers, also fall into this category. They can provide some help to customers during basic interactions, taking customers down a defined decision tree, but they can't discern customers' intent, offer customized responses, or learn from interactions over time. Embedded within existing systems, these AI applications are often less visible than stand-alone ones to the customers, marketers, and salespeople who use them. For example, machine learning that makes split-second decisions about which digital ads to offer users is built into platforms that handle the entire process of buying and placing ads. Netflix's integrated machine learning has offered customers video recommendations for more than a decade; its selections simply appear in the menu of offerings viewers see when they go to the site. If the recommendation engine were stand-alone, they would need to go to a dedicated app and request suggestions. As companies become more sophisticated in their use of marketing AI, many fully automate certain types of decisions, taking humans out of the loop entirely. With repetitive, high-speed decisions, such as those required for programmatic ad buying (where digital ads are served up almost instantaneously to users), this approach is essential. In other domains AI may only present recommendations to a person faced with a choice—for example, suggesting a movie to a consumer or a strategy to a marketing executive. Human decision-making is typically reserved for the most consequential questions, such as whether to continue a campaign or to approve an expensive TV ad. Firms should move to more-automated decisions whenever possible. We believe this is where the greatest returns from marketing AI will be found. (Davenport, Guha, Grewal, July-August 2021)

Like marketing, marketing communications are a dynamic field that reflects market developments, consumers, technology developments and other key factors. Each of the tools of the marketing communication mix has its specific function and fulfills different goals. It is therefore necessary to take into account whether it builds awareness, whether it informs, whether it pushes or pulls, or whether the company just wants to maximize sales and other goals. As we have already mentioned, the key goal is efficiency, both in the qualitative level (awareness, brand knowledge) and in the quantitative level (sales). However, in particular, efficiency must currently be seen in the ratio of cost versus income (cost per addressed consumer, cost per product sold, return on investment and others). In this article, we mentioned integrated marketing communications as a model that combines both classic and modern tools of marketing communications. It can be said with almost certainty that the integration of marketing communications tools will continue, with a reflection on key changes in company strategies and changes in consumer behavior.

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