

STRATEGY FOR PROMOTING INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS IN INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

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Abstract: The study proposes methodological approaches for promoting innovative products in international markets. Peculiarities of international promotion and barriers to innovation diffusion in the market have been identified. The proposed strategy formation model for promoting innovations in international markets takes into consideration the characteristics of the innovation, consumer behavior patterns, and consumer resistance to innovations. A specific innovative product in the US market is selected to test the model, and marketing research is conducted. The marketing research outcomes include insights into consumer motivations, and perception of innovations in the US plant-based meat market, which can serve as valuable input for companies while their promotion.

Keywords: innovative product, promotion strategy, international markets, international economic activity.

1 Introduction

In today's global economy driven by innovation, it is crucial for companies to continuously monitor the market and adapt their products, services, and working methods to maintain competitiveness. The implementation of innovative strategies serves as a key competitive advantage for companies, as it not only provides value to consumers but also positively influences competitiveness indicators in international markets while contributing to social responsibility. The rapid progress of science and technology, along with the swift commercialization of research and development, combined with intensified international competition in launching innovative products, have significantly influenced entrepreneurial activities. In light of these circumstances, the development of effective and successful strategies to promote innovative products in both domestic and international markets is an urgent priority that can secure competitive advantages and foster innovative leadership.

In order to tackle this challenge, it is essential to identify the crucial factors and attributes of product promotion in a dynamic global environment, particularly considering the pervasive influence of digitization in the economy. This knowledge can then be leveraged in the development of effective promotion strategies. With the ongoing advancements in science and technology, promotional tools are continuously evolving, making communication an increasingly vital component of marketing efforts for businesses operating in international markets. The competitive landscape is further intensified by aggressive communication policies employed by rival companies, aiming to capture larger market shares and targeting diverse market segments. This highlights the growing significance of communication in marketing and the international economic activities of innovative enterprises.

Numerous studies are devoted to the theoretical and practical aspects of developing a promotion strategy and its tools in companies' international economic activities.: Aaker D., Blyde J., Burnet J. and Moriarty S., Kotler P., Leikhif J., Lambin J-J., Ogivli D, Balabanova L., Kanishchenko O., Kochkina N., Lukyanets L., Primak T., Starostina A., etc. The problems of innovations and innovative development of international companies were considered in the works of Tidd J., Besant J., Pewitt K., Rothwell R., Cooper R., Porter M., Rogers E., Praude V., Starostina A., etc.

Despite the extensive research on innovations, product promotion strategy development, and individual elements of the marketing communications system, there has been a lack of research devoted to understanding the nuances of developing a promotion complex for innovative products on international markets. Given the high degree of competition, the dynamism of market environment factors, and the shortening of the life cycle of innovations, this issue has become particularly pertinent. Thus, *the aim of this research* is to propose a model for developing a strategy to promote innovative products in the modern, dynamic, and highly competitive international business environment, considering digitalization, along with practical recommendations based on the application of this model.

To achieve the stated objective research goals are the following:

- to identify the characteristics of promoting innovative products in modern conditions;
- to develop a strategy formation model for promoting innovative products in international markets;
- to test strategy formation model for promoting innovative products in international markets using the example of a selected innovative product in the US market, based on expert evaluations and conducted marketing research.

2 Literature review

A promotion strategy is used by companies to inform, persuade or remind consumers about goods, services, ideas, activities, etc. According to Burnett, J., & Moriarty, S. (1998) promotion is a process, due to which information about the product is transferred to the target audience. Blythe J. (2000) defines promotion strategy as a process of transfer of information about the product to the target audience, which provides them with an idea of the general strategy of the company by directing special appeals about the product, its price, and means of transmission. A common feature of numerous definitions of promotion strategy lies in the importance of informing consumers and intermediaries about the company's products and the company in general with the help of appropriate tools. The least highlighted component in most definitions is the result of the promotion strategy, and this component remains almost overlooked by researchers. A common element in the interpretation of the goal of promotion strategy is to achieve agreement and ensure long-term relations with counterparties on a mutually beneficial basis. Systematization and critical analysis of scientific sources on the topic made it possible to define the promotion strategy for innovative products as a way for the enterprise to achieve long-term goals, which coincides in the formation of a set of communication and sales tools to inform consumers about innovative products, intensifying their sales, establishing long-term mutually beneficial relations and forming a positive image of the company in the market.

Numerous studies in international promotion emphasize the necessity for strategy adaptation to an international market. The specifics of the promotion strategy in international business lie in differences in the business environment of home and host country. The factors influencing the international communication process are the factors of the market environment of the domestic and foreign markets: political-legal, economic, socio-cultural, demographic, scientific-technical, and geographical factors, which are characterized by a high degree of dynamism, unpredictability, and uncertainty. And especially relevant factors of influence are factors of sociocultural, linguistic, economic, and legislative differences and factors specific to the competitive situation on the market, greater costs for promotion due to remoteness, costs for cross-border movements, etc. (Hollensen, 2000). Promotion strategy adaptation is the extent to which the firm's domestic promotional program is customized to the export market (Lages, Abrantes, and Lages, 2008). The importance of conducting a strategic analysis of international markets, conducting a comprehensive examination of the socio-cultural

environment, and thoroughly analyzing secondary and primary marketing and economic information has become increasingly critical. This is due to the differences in market behavior among customers on the international market.

To develop a successful strategy for implementing innovation in the market, including the promotion of innovative products, it is crucial to conduct a thorough examination of consumer purchasing behavior characteristics and identify barriers to the adoption of innovation.

The promotion of innovative products possesses certain distinctive features compared to well-established products in the market, which are associated with their unique characteristics and the presence of consumer resistance towards the adoption of innovations. It is important to determine the barriers to the adoption of innovation and their impact on consumer behavior, making purchase decisions. Strategy formation of innovative products is characterized by certain specifics compared to market-known goods related to their features and the consumer resistance to the spread of innovations. E. Rogers emphasizes the innovative characteristics that are key success factors of new products (Rogers, 2003). Along with this, a number of other of scientific research focus on the barriers to the adoption of innovations by consumers. This is especially relevant for the process of technological implementation innovations. When studying consumer resistance, two categories of barriers are recognized (Ram, Sheth, 1989; Ram, 1989; Claudy, Garcia, O'driscol, 2021):

- functional barriers, when consumers evaluate the consequences from a point of view of use, cost, and risk;
- psychological barriers, which mostly arise due to conflicts with the previous beliefs of consumers.

Based on the study of scientific sources (Henard and Szymanski, 2001, Montoya-Weiss and Calantone, 1994, Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1987), four groups of factors for the implementation of a new product on the market can be distinguished: the market (intensity of competition, likely reaction of competitors, market potential), characteristics of the innovative product (satisfaction of consumer needs, relative utility, technological complexity), characteristics of the company's strategy (technological synergy, market synergy, human resources, and R&D), characteristics of the innovation process (marketing task, predevelopment task, technological and launch proficiencies, cross-functional integration and communication).

The format that companies use to convey information about product innovations is of high importance for the market success of these innovations (Noseworthy and Trudel 2011; Reinders, Frambach, and Schoormans 2010; Townsend and Kahn 2014; Wood and Moreau 2006). Traditional information presentation formats often fail to stimulate and effectively communicate the advantages of these innovations (Wood and Lynch, 2002).

An ineffectively developed strategy for the promotion of innovative products can lead to the following negative consequences (Praude et al, 1994):

- non-acceptance and misunderstanding of the novelty by the consumer, insufficient level of readiness for it;
- the oversaturation of dependent and morally obsolete goods;
- an increase in the time it takes to introduce an innovative product to the market due to insufficient prior consumer awareness;
- loss of competitive advantage, namely the priority of commercialization of an innovative product;
- deviation of the actual profitability (of the innovative product and its promotion strategy) from the planned downwards, failure to achieve the planned marketing and financial goals of the strategy;
- reduction of the scientific, technical, and technological level of the economic entity, etc. (the violation of financial

plans for the implementation of the strategy reduces the possibilities of financing the R&D of the enterprise and its innovative potential).

Therefore, *the purpose of this research* is to develop mechanisms for strategy formation to promote innovative products in international markets based on identifying their characteristics, factors, stages, and promotional tools.

3 Methodology

Applying the method of systematization and factor analysis, the features of innovative products and their promotion processes were identified, and the correlation between the features of the innovative product, its category, and the choice of more effective tools of the promotion complex were determined. Based on the application of the method of synthesizing theoretical positions of scholars and their critical analysis, the investigation of strategic management principles in marketing and international business activities, and the hypothesis method, a model for formulating a strategy to promote innovative products have been developed. To validate the proposed model using the example of an innovative product such as plant-based meat in the US market, a data collection and processing method was employed, and a marketing research study was conducted, including surveys of the target audience. Based on the findings, recommendations for the promotional strategy were formulated.

4 Research results

The strategy of a company actively implementing innovations should be built upon considering the specific nature of innovative products, in contrast to traditional goods. It should be based on assessing favorable and limiting factors in the business environment and aimed at maximizing economic efficiency while reducing financial and labor costs associated with the development and implementation of the innovation promotion or product differentiation strategy.

Based on the identification of differences between innovative products and traditional ones, the following characteristics of an innovation promotion strategy have been determined:

- rapid aging of the innovative product;
- high level of competition;
- high degree of dynamism of the market environment;
- high level of expenses at the stage of developing an idea and introducing an innovative product to the market, which subsequently leads to a limited budget for the implementation of effective promotion strategy tools;
- high speed of copying the main characteristics of the innovative product by competitors;
- peculiarities of consumer demand, for example, consumers' devotion to traditional goods, ignorance of innovations, mistrust of novelties, reluctance to spend more money for innovation, etc.

The following hypotheses were proposed to identify key aspects of the mechanisms for developing a strategy to promote innovative products in international markets:

H1. Innovation characteristics have a key influence on the promotion of innovative products in international markets.

H2. Identifying the characteristics of consumer behavior when purchasing an innovation is a necessary stage in developing a strategy for promoting an innovative product on international markets.

H3. Assessment and consideration of barriers of innovation perception is a mandatory component of developing a strategy for the promotion of an innovative product.

These hypotheses were confirmed and taken into account in the authors' research through the process of surveying and analyzing the results.

Based on upon extensive scientific research on this matter and the author's own study, which identified the characteristics of the innovative product and factors influencing its promotion, as well as the specifics of implementing and realizing innovative products in the market, a model for developing a strategy to promote innovative products in international markets was developed by the authors (Fig. 1).

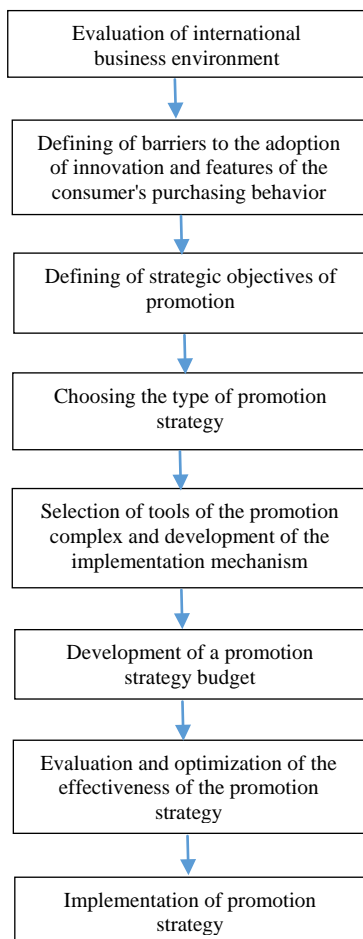


Fig1. Strategy formation model for promoting innovative products in international markets
Source: own elaboration

The first stage of strategy formation for promoting innovative products involves monitoring the external and internal market environment and is carried out in order to set strategic goals for company's development. This stage includes business environment analysis and SWOT analysis. The implementation of this stage helps to set an actual goal and to choose relevant promotion tools. In the aspect of analyzing the macro marketing environment, it is necessary to analyze the political-legal, economic, cultural, socio-demographic, geographical, and scientific-technical factors affecting the company's activity on the market. Factors of the micro marketing environment include the activities of consumers, competitors, suppliers, intermediaries, and contact audiences.

The next stage is to determine the barriers to the perception of the innovation and the characteristics of the consumer's purchasing behavior. Taking into account the difference between innovative products and traditional ones the following features of promotion strategy for innovations can be determined:

- high level of unpredictability and volatility of the market of innovative goods and the business environment in which the innovation process is carried out;
- the necessity of taking into account the peculiarities of the purchasing behavior of the potential consumer of the

innovative product and the level of his perception of innovations;

- dependence of the type of promotion on market goals and innovation strategies of the enterprise, as well as the category of the innovative product;
- dependence of the goals and tools of the promotion strategy on the type of innovation;
- necessity of development of a promotion complex in accordance with the life-cycle stage of innovation;
- impact of innovative product positions in the company's product portfolio on the development of a promotion strategy;
- the existence of consumers' barriers in the process of adapting to the innovative product;
- difficulties in evaluating the effectiveness of the communication complex.

Consumer resistance to the perception of innovations depends on the following factors: 1) innovation characteristics; 2) customers' characteristics and risks; 3) marketing strategy; 4) business environment factors (Fig. 2)

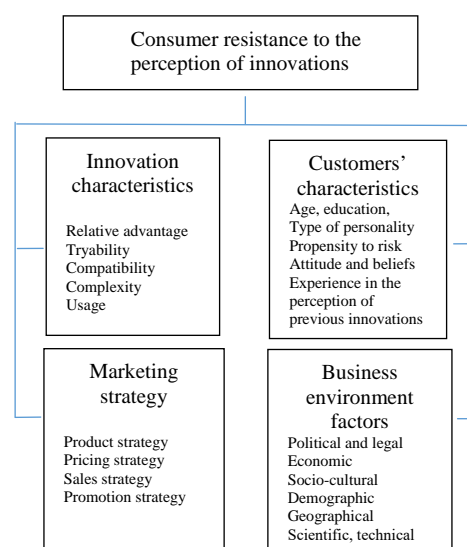


Fig. 2. Consumer resistance to the perception of innovations
Source: own elaboration

The third stage of strategy formation model comprises defining both strategic and operational objectives. The strategic objective is to attain a specified market share, sales volume, and profit level for the innovative product.

As defined at the previous stage, the strategy formation model depends on the product's innovative characteristics and the peculiarities of the consumer's purchasing behavior. Therefore, the communication goals of innovation promotion are the following:

- informing about the value and advantages of an innovative product compared to a traditional one;
- informing about the way to use and maintain the product;
- informing about the possible risks associated with the use of the innovative product or ways to minimize them and safe use of the product;
- informing about possible types of services, that are provided for consumers of the innovative product;
- formation of the image of a reliable product with a high degree of relative advantage, value, tryability, compatibility, possibility of evaluation and a low degree of complexity;
- formation of a positive image of the product.

At the fifth stage of the strategy formation model for promoting innovative products the tools of the promotion complex are selected - advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, and the development of mechanisms for the implementation of the strategy.

When strategy formation for penetrating an innovation to the market, including a promotion strategy, there is a need to clearly define the category of the innovative product and take into account its specifics. Table 1 shows the communication goals and recommendations for the elements of the promotion complex of various categories of innovative products.

Table 1. Communication goals and recommended elements of promotion mix of various categories of innovative products

Level of innovativeness of products	Advertising costs	Communication goals	Recommended elements of the promotion mix
New-to-the-world	Exceed production costs	- informing about the situation and method of using the product; - informing about innovative characteristics (relative advantage, compatibility, tryability) - informing about the absence of risks associated with the use of the product	Informative advertising, PR
Additions to existing product lines	High costs	-informing about the expansion of the assortment, the method of use, and situations of use of the product; - informing about the absence of risks associated with the use of the product or ways to minimize them; - formation of a positive image of the product	Informative advertising, PR, sales promotion
Products improvements	Low costs	- informing about the advantages of the improved product, the way to use and maintain the product; - formation of a positive image of the product	Informative advertising, PR, sales promotion
Repositioning	Costs are increasing	- informing about the change in positioning, the situation, and the method of using the product; - informing about possible ways of service and support for consumers of the innovative product	Advertising, PR of innovative goods on a new market
Costs reductions	Low costs	- forming a belief about a high degree of relative usefulness, tryability, compatibility, evaluation possibilities, and a low level of complexity. - formation of a positive image and recognition of the product	Advertising, sales promotion

After determining the elements of the promotion complex, a detailed program of their implementation is developed, and planning of advertising strategy, PR strategy, sales promotion, and personal selling activities is carried out. The promotion strategy is aimed to overcome customer's barriers to the innovations diffusion process (table 2).

Table 2. Recommendations for overcoming barriers of innovations diffusion due to promotion strategy

Barriers	Characteristics of barriers	Features of the promotion strategy
Tradition barrier	Values, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions, consumer culture	Informative advertising with an emphasis on the functional advantages of the innovative product possibility of trial period
Value barrier	Perception of the new product as identical to existing ones, without the additional functional characteristics	Advertising to increase awareness and direct marketing to emphasize benefits
Risk	Functional, social, financial, waste of time	Informative advertising, advertising message - emphasis on compliance with all requirements and standards, influence marketing, after-sales service
Psychological factors	Attitude to the brand, potential impact on social status, compliance with social norms	Combination of emotional and rational advertising, public relations, event marketing, loyalty programs

To implement the promotion strategy, it is essential to develop a comprehensive plan that includes schedules, task allocation, and a media plan. Each tool within the promotion program must be carefully considered, and decisions should be made accordingly. The allocation of responsibilities to designated personnel and the establishment of monitoring and control mechanisms are critical to ensuring timely execution of each task within the promotion complex. The subsequent phase encompasses the allocation and distribution of the promotion budget for executing the planned actions. However, given the distinctiveness of promoting innovative products, the process of budget formation should be approached with careful consideration of aligning the budgeting method with the established goals and objectives.

Evaluation of the effectiveness of the promotion complex is carried out according to two key approaches: evaluation of economic effectiveness, as an analysis of the relationship between the implemented marketing communications campaign and the change in the financial and economic results of the enterprise, caused by the influence of the promotion complex. Effectiveness evaluating also involves determining the level of profitability of marketing investments and their payback period. In this case, it is crucial to evaluate the potential increase in income and profits resulting from the implementation of the marketing measures and associated costs. This assessment is used to optimize the list of measures and costs, ensuring profitability, payback, and an acceptable level of return. It is also important to evaluate the communicative effectiveness of the developed tools in promoting the product, which can impact the relationships between market players and affect the economic situation of the company. Finally, the last stage involves the implementation of the promotion strategy and assessing the actual effectiveness of the developed measures, including the achievement of strategic goals and planned indicators.

Let's consider the peculiarities of strategy formation for the promotion of innovative products using the example of plant-based meat (vegan meat) in the US market.

Vegan meat is an innovative product, a meat substitute made from plant-based ingredients, has been growing in popularity in recent years due to the increasing demand for sustainable and ethical food options. The U.S. market is one of the biggest markets for vegan meat, and it presents a significant opportunity for plant-based companies. Several plant-based meat companies have already established a presence in the U.S. market, including Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods. These companies have partnered with major fast-food chains and grocery stores to offer plant-based meat products. This suggests high probability rates of vegan meat adoption in the U.S. culture of consumption. The openness of the U.S. market in terms of vegan meat perception also presents an opportunity for plant-based meat companies to innovate and create new products.

Vegan meat is designed to mimic the taste, texture, and appearance of real meat, but without the environmental and ethical concerns associated with animal agriculture. Taking in consideration customer's barrier to innovation perception there are some challenges that plant-based meat companies will need to overcome in order to succeed in the U.S. market:

- 1) high cost of plant-based meat is a barrier to consumers' adoption of innovative products;
- 2) skepticism among consumers about the taste and texture of plant-based meat, which may require more marketing efforts to overcome;
- 3) prejudice that persists among consumers about the quality of this product and the adequacy of its nutritional value in comparison with traditional meat.

Since the main ingredient of plant-based meat is soy, some prejudice persists among consumers about the quality of this product and the adequacy of its nutritional value in comparison with traditional meat. In order to establish consumers' motivations while purchasing plant-based meat in the U.S. for promotion strategy formation market the research was fulfilled.

In line with hypotheses (H1, H2, H3) to identify innovation characteristics of the product, peculiarities of consumer behavior, and barriers of innovation perception, research objectives, and questions were defined (table 3).

Table 3. Research objectives and questions for investigating customer’s motivations in the perception of plant-based meat

Research objectives	Research questions	Description
Innovation characteristics (H1)	What may serve as a main motivation for consumers to switch from traditional meat to plant-based?	To determine the relative advantage of plant-based meat alternatives over the traditional one
	Can plant-based meat provide customers with superior nutritional value and taste? Are there some benefits of plant-based meat?	To determine the relative advantage of plant-based meat alternatives over the traditional one
Characteristics of consumer behaviour (H2)	What kind of diet do consumers follow the most?	To determine settled consumer behaviour and whether the diet would serve as a determinant of the level of customers’ plant-based consumption
	What do consumers derive from eating traditional meat?	To research what may stop a traditional meat consumer from eating vegan meat, in case it could not match the particular benefits of traditional meat.
	How integrated is meat into a consumer’s daily diet? How frequently do they consume meat?	To research previous practices and the level of meat loyalty. The more frequently consumer eats regular meat, the harder it would be for them to switch to plant-based alternatives
	How concerned are consumers of how their purchase behaviour impacts the environment?	If the consumer does not care for the environment, they may not be motivated by negative environmental factors of a traditional meat industry to switch to plant-based meat
	How concerned are consumers about their health and whether or not they have some chronic health conditions, such as cardiovascular diseases, obesity, etc?	To determine potential problems which may arise from constant consumption of traditional meat in order to leverage them in the future to promote the transition to the healthy alternative – plant-based meat
Barriers of innovation perception (tradition barrier, value barrier, risk, psychological factors) (H3)	What is the role of traditional food in customers eating habits?	Determination of traditional barriers that may prevent consumers from purchasing plant-based meat
	What is consumer perception of soy products and its presence in meat products?	To determine social norms and beliefs about soy. There is a perception that meat products containing any level of added soy to the ingredient list are considered to be of inferior quality
	What are the factors that can prevent customers from switching to plant-based meat?	Determination of value, risk, and psychological factors that can prevent consumers from purchasing plant-based meat

A questionnaire was composed to gather marketing data, and a survey was conducted to investigate consumer motivations for purchasing plant-based meat in the U.S. market. The research involved 36 participants. The demographic profile of the sample is presented in table 4.

Table 4. Demographic profile of the sample

Measure	Absolute values	Percentages
Gender		
Male	10	27,8%
Female	26	72,2%
Meat consumption		
Yes	34	94,4%
No	2	5,6%
Age		
20-30	20	55,6%
31-40	4	11,1%
over 46	12	33,3%

The analysis of the collected data yielded the following outcomes. Upon examining the participants’ dietary habits, a correlation between their eating patterns and their perception of conventional meat was observed. A majority of 86.1% of respondents reported not having any specific dietary restrictions or following a particular diet.

To examine the regularity of traditional meat consumption and the degree of consumers’ fondness for this product, a relevant question was posed. As a result, it was determined that 66.7% of respondents regularly consume meat at least once a week, while another 25% consume meat regularly but with less frequency, multiple times a month, while 5.6% of the respondents do not consume meat. We included a question in the survey to understand the motivating factors behind traditional meat consumption. The results showed that taste is the primary motivator for 47.2% of respondents, followed by the high nutritional value of meat. Long-term satiety ranked third in the level of significance among consumers. The proximity of the product and the desire to stay close to cultural cuisine were the least significant motivators for consumers (Fig.3).

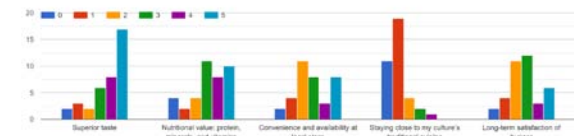


Fig. 3. Factors by the level of their importance for consumers in assessing benefits from eating a traditional meat

Therefore, we can conclude that taste profile and nutritional value are the main drivers in consumers’ behavior when choosing to buy meat. That allows us to assume that in order to encourage such people to switch to plant-based meat, they would thoroughly examine how this type of product compares to traditional meat in taste and nutritional value. In case vegan meat would not match the traditional one in these criteria, consumers would not opt for them.

Since we established that the taste factor is a primary driver of consumer choice here, it is essential to measure the consumer’s belief towards difference in vegan and traditional meats’ taste profiles. The results are the following: 41,7% of respondents believe that vegan meat could match the taste profile of traditional meat, while 36,1% of them hesitate to answer and only 22,2% believe that this notion is false. All things considered, those respondents who believe that vegan meat could match the taste profile of a traditional one or hesitate to answer are the exact audience that needs to be targeted by vegan meat producers, because as long as their product satisfies their main demand – taste, it has a chance to compete with traditional product.

Another important factor to measure in this research is consumers’ attitudes toward soy. A few decades ago soy was perceived as a replacement for traditional meat products in the ingredient list, intended to cheapen their production and increase the volume by also minimizing the content of real animal-derived ingredients. Since modern innovative vegan meat is produced primarily of soy and since its price is usually higher than those of traditional meat, consumers may face a dissonance and be hesitant to opt for this new product on the market.

To take a more in-depth view of consumers' attitudes towards soy, an additional question was asked to measure if they would consider vegan soy meat a decent alternative to replacing traditional meat. 38,9% disagree with the notion that soy products are designed to cheapen the production of meat and therefore they could not be considered a decent alternative to animal meat. 44,4% of respondents hesitate to state their attitude towards this issue, while 16,7% expressed a level of agreement. Summing up, we can establish that at least 38,9 to 83,3% of respondents would not have any prejudice against soy being a primary ingredient of vegan meat, therefore it would not be a barrier to purchase.

As we described previously, the main facilitator of vegan meat market growth was the environmental concerns of modern consumers about the detrimental effect that traditional meat production has on the ozone layer and soil and water contamination levels. Thus, we can assume that those respondents that have a high level of environmental awareness and strive for minimizing the negative effect of their choices on the environment would be a target audience for plant-based meat. To understand the scale of this target audience several questions were asked.

First of all, we identified that 58,3% of respondents in the U.S. market have high self-assessed levels of environmental awareness, while 25% consider it average (Fig.4).

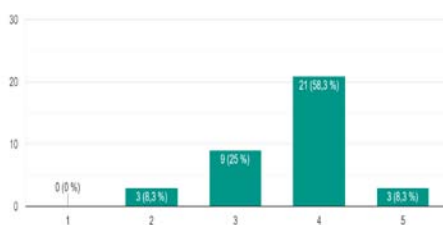


Fig.4. Rate of environmental awareness

Nevertheless, only 2,8% of respondents put the highest level of effort into minimizing the impact their consumer choices have on the environment, while 33,3% consider them rather high, another 41,7% - mild, and the last 22,2% rather low (Fig.5). From this data, we can deduce that vegan meat's positioning as environmentally friendly would resonate approximately with 36,1% of consumers, while others would not be that willing to make an effort to minimize the impact their meat consumption has on the environment.

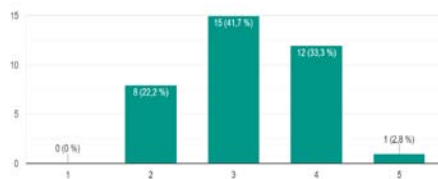


Fig. 5. Evaluation of the level of consumer effort to minimize the impact of their choices on the environment

Another important aspect to measure here is the level of awareness consumers have about this detrimental effect that the traditional meat industry has on the environment. In our research, we established that 30,6% of respondents have a strongly negative attitude towards the negative impact of the meat industry on our environment, while also 33,3% expressed a somewhat negative attitude. This constitutes 63,9% of the consumers that may be targeted by vegan meat producers using the argument of the traditional meat industry's drawbacks and presenting an alternative – sustainable vegan meat. 36,1% of respondents express either indifference to this issue or their doubts about its relevance.

In order to identify potential barriers preventing consumers from switching to plant-based meat despite its environmental benefits, a specific question was included in the survey. Among the highest barriers to switching from animal to plant meat are: concerns about the disparity in their nutritional values, and concerns about the quality and taste profile. Apart from that, the price also serves as a deterrent factor to switching. In order to overcome these barriers, manufacturers of these innovative vegan-meat products should address the aforementioned concerns in their marketing mix and promotional campaigns.

While additionally discovering factors that may incentivize vegan meat purchasing, it was established that equality in their taste profiles would serve as a main motivation to try this innovative vegan meat product, while also its benefits in mitigating negative health conditions and animal-cruelty prevention, as well as sustainability are considered important motivational factors for purchase. These benefits should also be leveraged by manufacturers in their marketing mix.

Summing up, the conducted research has shown us that the majority of respondents are traditional meat eaters and have a high culture of this product's consumption. Nevertheless, vegan meat has a huge potential in the U.S. market considering the high level of consumers' concerns about the traditional meat industry's impact on the environment, as well as the low level of prejudice against soy as an ingredient. Like any innovative product, plant-based vegan meat also faces several barriers to its promotion. One of the biggest obstacles preventing Americans from switching to vegan meat is their concern that it may not match the taste and nutritional value of animal meat products, although they acknowledge that it is possible. Pricing also plays a major role in consumers' reluctance to try the product, as they see no reason to pay a higher price for a product they have doubts about. Given that traditional meat is valued for its taste, nutritional value, and ability to satisfy hunger for a long time, a promotion strategy for plant-based meat products should focus on these factors, which are the main barriers to perception – lack of value and relative advantage of the product.

Based on this, a promotion strategy can be proposed for companies operating in the plant-based meat market. The results indicate that the goal of the promotion strategy is to create value and comparative advantages of the product in the consumer's mind. Therefore, the primary communication objective is informative to reach a wide audience of customers, aiming to form the consumer's initial perception of the product and its key benefits. Intensive and informative communication can make this possible. Accordingly, the following promotion tools can be used:

- advertising: focusing on highlighting the product's features and benefits that align with the goals of sustainable development, societal eco-trends, conscious consumption, and being beneficial for consumer health;
- public relations: aimed at shaping the product's image as one that aligns with sustainable development objectives, eco-friendly trends, conscious consumption, and being beneficial for consumer health.

Strategies for penetrating foreign markets with innovative product and marketing strategies in modern conditions should align with the global sustainable development goals for the period up to 2030, established by the United Nations in 2015 and reaffirmed through its resolution. These goals serve as the main guide for the development of all sectors of the economy. The production of the researched innovative product is based on the use of plant-based ingredients that are part of climate-friendly food technologies. Therefore, it can be concluded that this allows for the realization of the following sustainable development goals of humanity:

- Goal 2 of sustainable development: overcoming hunger and promoting agriculture, as it produces new innovative technologies for the development of the food industry.

- Goal 3 of sustainable development: ensuring good health and well-being, which is directly related to the development of two sectors: medicine and the food industry.
- Goal 13: mitigating the consequences of climate change through the use of modern technologies that are less harmful in terms of emissions and climate preservation.

5 Conclusions

Developing an effective promotion strategy for innovative products in the international markets requires a thorough examination of their innovative features, the purchasing behavior of the consumer, and the identification of any barriers to their perception. This forms the basis for creating a promotion strategy that can effectively overcome these obstacles. The proposed approach for developing such a strategy involves monitoring the market environment, identifying barriers to the perception of innovation, defining goals for the promotion strategy, planning the strategy and defining the tools for the promotion complex, preparing and distributing the promotion budget, evaluating effects, and assessing effectiveness. This includes forecasting sales and profit growth, and determining whether the target strategic goals and planned indicators have been achieved.

The primary research conducted allowed for the identification of aspects that are important for the development of promotion strategies for innovations in international markets, including key characteristics of innovative products, factors, and peculiarities of consumer motivations, and barriers to innovation adoption. This can be applied in practice across various business domains to select promotion tools and build an effective set of strategic promotion measures.

The directions for further research may focus on specific characteristics of the innovative product and take into account their peculiarities when developing a promotion strategy in international markets. Namely, the values of the innovative product, and the development of measures aimed at conveying these values to the customer. Future research may also focus on exploring sector-specific characteristics of promotion strategies for innovative goods in different economic branches and on different international markets with various cultural contexts.

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Primary Paper Section: A

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