

The New Key of Competitive Advantage in Business

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Abstract

Given the new knowledge economy, competitive environment, the rise of the new technologies and also the new instruments for marketing and management – from social media to software, from chatbots to ERP – every business has to understand that adjusting to the new conditions is vital not only to survive, but to have a competitive advantage.

Using the new strategies and trends for communication is actually the key of a business development and the key to competitive advantage.

In this paper, the author explores the nature of a communication strategy in the context of social media, briefly summarize the process followed in developing a communication strategy for a small business and share lessons learned useful to others involved in strategic planning efforts.

Key words: competitive advantage, communication, strategy, new economy

J.E.L. classification: L80, M13, M30

1. Introduction

Communication is a field of study that draws from many academic disciplines and this interdisciplinary perspective present communication as a process of generating meaning by sending and receiving useful content.

The analyzed company is a start-up developed in Romania in 2019 from a PR single communication activity. The start-up has followed a communication model, as a result of a branding model developed by the owner.

The model states that there are five steps in which a business image, an authentic business and personal image, may be developed [Lupşa, 2019]. Four of them consists of establishing the values, the mission, vision, straights, the last one consists of establishing the colors, the messages, the voice of the brand, the images, the key words proper for the brand archetype.

2. Theoretical background

Communication becomes mass communication when the message is adjusted in order to become part of many people's life mostly through electronic media. Websites, blogs, and social media become within the last 5 years mass communication channels that most of us probably are engaging to. For a business, s certain amount of intentionality message transmitted as a mass communication message required one or more steps to convey it [Potter, 1997].

Mass communication differs from other forms in terms of the personal connection between participants, as it creates the illusion of a personal connection Considering the new media channels - blogs and Facebook for instance - feedback is becoming immediate or even instant. Radios and televisions even ask for feedback from viewers/listeners via social media and may even share the feedback on the air [Porter, 1996].

Communication scholars focusing on mass communication often have a critical approach in order to examine how new media influences the culture and who are the ones included and excluded in different mediated messages [Hickock, 1997].

The brand archetype model is derived from the work of Karl Jung, starting from 1953 and adjusted to the brand theory by Margaret Mark in 2001.

The model used and proposed by the owner of the start-up business is developed based on this theory and combines also color psychology, image crises, marketing, management and management theory, but also communication theories.

3. Research methodology

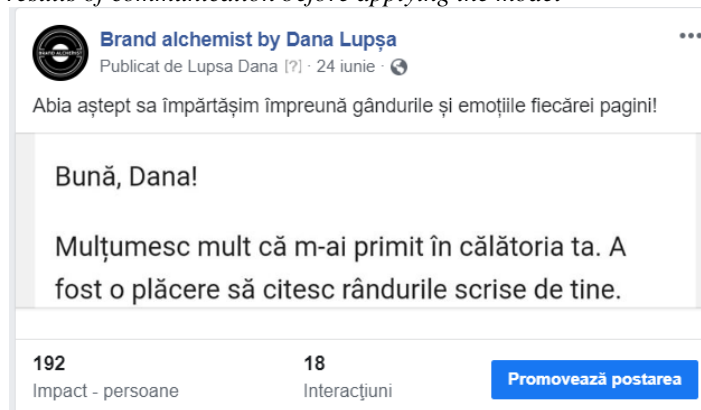
The research methodology is based on the observation method and comparing the results of communication before applying the model and after by the start-up.

Thus, there were analyzed both the impact – known as engagement – of the Facebook posts over a period of 1-year time, and the financial results that the author consider are strictly connected.

4. Findings

The research methodology is based on the observation method and comparing the results of communication before applying the model and after by the start-up.

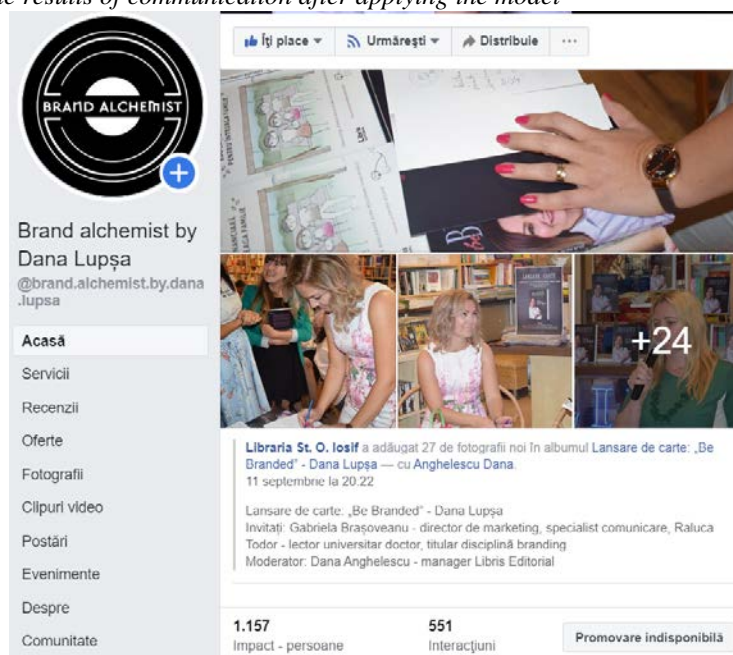
Figure no. 1. The results of communication before applying the model



Source: (the social media page of the business)

As one can observe from figure number 1, before applying the model, the impact of a post was for about 192 people and only 18 interactions.

Figure no. 2. The results of communication after applying the model

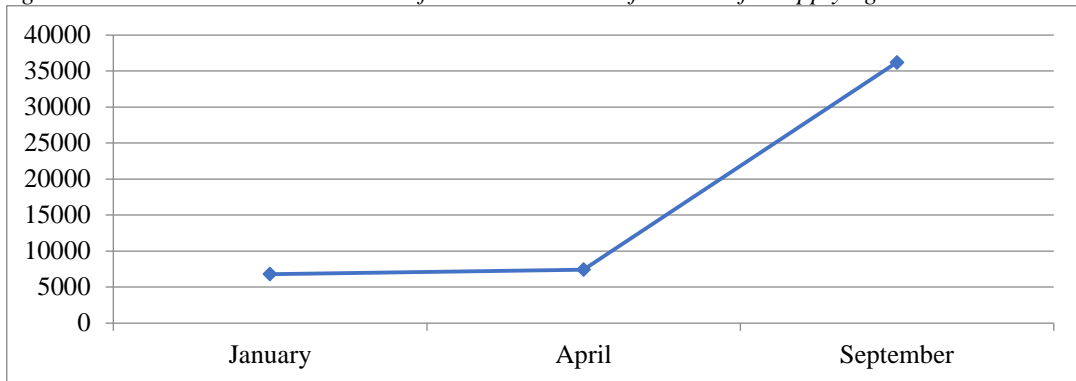


Source: (the social media page of the business)

As one can observe from figure number 2, after applying the model, the impact of a post raised from 192 to 1157 and the impact raised from 18 interactions to 551.

Also, the financial results are increased, as shown in figure number 3.

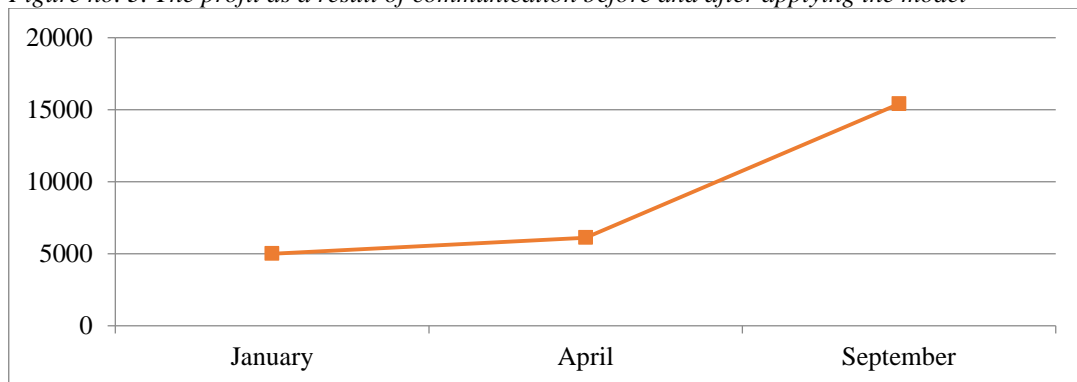
Figure no. 3. The turnover as a result of communication before and after applying the model



Source: (the financial results of the business)

As one can observe from figure number 3 and number 4, after applying the model, the profit has raised from 5000lei in January 2019 to 15400 in September 2019.

Figure no. 3. The profit as a result of communication before and after applying the model



Source: (the financial results of the business)

We have to underline that the impact of communication is not the only factor for this evolution, but also the fact that the portfolio of products and services had been developed. Thus, there was printed a book – the messages about the book were communicated according to the values and the mission of the brand – and also a video online course was relished.

5. Conclusions

In term of the nature of communication, one may understand that the power of mass communication within the new economy is vital – the website promoted through the social media, both Facebook and Instagram – the structure of messages according to the brand archetype was a success factors and also following the trend of engagement – in terms of contests and questions addressed to the target market. There were still not so many videos, but this is a trend for 2019 and also for 2020 communication process.

In terms of the processed followed, there were few steps followed – the first was to define and write down the values, the mission, the vision and the straights, the second was to define the public and social and also desirable image, the third was to establish the target market, the forth was establishing the message, the colors and the tone of the voice and afterwards the communication channels.

After accomplishing the work for all of those steps, the brand was clearer communicated and branded, the target market was attracted to the tone of the voice and the effort of communication was far less pressing.

In terms of lessons learned, useful to other start-ups involved in communication process, one may understand that there is a process of planning and adjusting the message to the public. Not all the posts on Facebook for instance have the same impact or engagement, but it is essential to use special techniques for certain objectives.

Also, in term of lesson learned, the start-up has to begin by documenting and fully understanding the target market, and work constantly to achieve the communication objectives. Although every owner and marketing specialist is experiencing discomfort about the objectives and also about the challenges that they are trying to figure out, all of them have to be committed to achieving the communication goals, mostly in term of engagement, that eventually will lead to a more credible, authentic and appealing communication strategy.

Every marketing specialist has to be prepared for implementation the strategy, including all the instruments which support the start-up owner in need: focus groups, document reviews and feedback loops also.

The start-up has to practice periodically meeting management and carefully documented decisions, as the website and other online instruments may be a very special tool for working papers.

Even though the temptation to action before the strategy is complete is high, the owner has to resist it. When the strategy base on the model presented was not even ready, the management began to focus almost exclusively on the services and there were discussions regarding budgets before the strategy was complete. But first there was done a complete report based on the most accurate perception of the problem, and there was also a resistance to implement and improve step by step the strategy.

When the strategy was finally ready, in the context of all of the market findings, the owner supported all. Using also, apart from Facebook and Instagram, other communication products, including a newsletter, free PDF and some free videos, one may understand that communication will have greater whole-product support.

The model is a proper one and its efficiency is demonstrated both by the reviews of the book and also by the results of those implementing it, corroborated to the video course.

6. References

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