

Some Developments in Direct Marketing

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Abstract: Addressing directly to consumers has proven one of the most effective solutions to market a product or service development. If the invention of printing allowed an unprecedented increase, hitherto, communication to the masses, need to increase the impact of a promotional message led gradually to its personalization solution and sending it directly to the target audience. The information society offers those solutions that allow a highly accurate identification of the target audience, building databases more rigorously and more extensively, and channels required for a promotional message to go directly to its recipient.

Key words: *direct marketing, direct mail, telmarketing, data, digital society*

JEL Classification: M30, M31, M37

1. Introduction:

Remarkable theorists already announced the decline era of mass advertising and the significant ascent of the direct marketing (Hirschmann, 2012). Direct marketing efforts to conceptualize show to its defining features, as they were perceived by each theorist and depending on the characteristics of each stage of development of economy and technology.

The digitization of economic activity will lead to profound changes in the instruments and mechanisms for the implementation of direct marketing campaigns, leading to the emergence of new features thereof and maybe, new conceptualizations of direct marketing and marketing, in general. It is possible that in the future, technological developments generate reassessments of distinctions between personal and communication to the masses, but also in terms of content and inland promotional message that it is sent / received.

Direct marketing is a form of marketing which is addressed directly through various communication channels, to the potential consumer, in order to get a concrete, measurable and possibly immediate response (purchase product / service). Therefore, direct marketing aims towards a personalized communication product / service.

„Direct marketing is the direct speech addressed through various media in order to produce those to whom they are addressed, a concrete response, and wherever possible, an immediate one”. (Hirschmann, 2012)

2. A short summary of the development of direct sales

The invention of printing in 1455 produced a real revolution, not only in the cultural evolution of humanity, but also in communicating the message coupon. One of the first printed advertisements was conducted in 1472 in England and promoting the sale of a book of prayers¹, sending an advertising message addressed to the masses. Very soon, the efficiency of promotional materials addressed directly to the target audience was identified.

The first catalog of products was printed to be sold in 1498 in Venice by Aldus Manutius and contained a list of titles of books that could be purchased².

A catalog containing prices of seeds was published in 1667 by William Lucas, an English gardener, which he had for sale and shipped directly to its customers³.

Benjamin Franklin remained in history not only because he invented, among other things, lightning rod and bifocal lens, but also for its role in business development based on mail order. In 1744, he launched on the North American territory, a catalog of nearly 600 titles of scientific and academic books⁴ intended for sale.

The second half of the 19th century was marked by an intense development based on mail order sales of products from catalogs. In 1872, Aaron Montgomery Ward published in Chicago the first general catalog of products and in the same year, he founded the *Montgomery Ward & Company* which extended the sales to national mail order for the United States⁵. After 1890 Ward Catalog reached over 24,000 articles and exceeded 200 pages⁶.

Development of railway infrastructure and the possibility of delivery by mail packages available have seen a rapid expansion of this type of sales, highlighting the advantages of direct marketing. Low cost (at least in relation to mass marketing budgets needed), fast response measurability.

Standardization the measurements of soldiers' uniforms during The Civil War from the United States (1861-1865) later allowed the realization of apparel catalogs destined for sale by mail order⁷.

Basically, sales by mail order, based on catalogs, which offered from consumer goods, to building materials and even homes, have become a powerful communication vehicle of tenders and distribution to the target audience and contributed not only to the increase of the companies' turnovers, but also to the intensification of globalization.

Gradually, mail order sales have transformed more and more, from means of distribution of the products to technical communication offers. The epistolary style became an inspiration for finding a solution for

¹ <https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Publicitate>

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mail_order

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mail_order

⁴ <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-03-13/how-benjamin-franklin-invented-the-mail-order-business>

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aaron_Montgomery_Ward

⁶ <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-03-13/how-benjamin-franklin-invented-the-mail-order-business>

⁷ <http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2013-03-13/how-benjamin-franklin-invented-the-mail-order-business>

persuasive messages of addressing personal code. Virtually it was achieved an ingenious replacement of personal written communication that traditionalized human culture since ancient times, with communicating for commercial purposes. That is how the direct answering advertising letter appeared, that made history in the evolution of direct marketing and has generated a huge interest in literature.

Telemarketing had a significant impact in stimulating direct marketing campaigns. Telephone communication has brought important benefits for the consumer's reaching efforts and to the new solutions into getting a quick answer from him on all products and services or for promotional campaigns in progress.

The advent of the Internet has revolutionized the direct communication, has brought unthinkable solutions until then, for creating databases and for direct and interactive communication with the consumer and it has opened practically, a new era in the evolution of direct marketing and marketing in general.

3. The importance of Direct Marketing Professional Organizations

One of the signs of a maturing market is to create organizations that would formulate and defend its interests. Market creates its own internal self-regulatory tools, a code of ethics for themselves and begin to relate to customers not only institutional, but also to any other organization, private or governmental, obviously, within the existing legal framework. A structure it is being created, that introduces new professional criteria, of higher quality, and ensuring that all is respected.

In 1917, in the United States, it was created the *Direct Mail Advertising Association*⁸, and in 1973 it changed its name to *Direct Mail / Marketing Association*, becoming then, in 1983, *The Direct Marketing Association (DMA)*. Currently, *DMA* represents nearly 3600 organizations which comply with ethical rules aimed at included consumer protection⁹. According to studies *DMA*¹⁰, last year, over 70% of American citizens have shopped directly and in over 80% of US households, there had been read some or all advertisements received by mail (the traditional and e). Still *DMA* estimates that if American citizens would replace traditional commerce with direct mail, would make a saving of US \$ 650 million of fuel¹¹. Moreover, the benefits of direct mail are correctly perceived by the market, which made it possible in the previous year, the value of sales through direct mail to be of 686 billion \$¹².

We can say that concern for creating a professional infrastructure for direct sales preceded some steps to conceptualize this particular type of marketing. The *direct marketing* concept was first formulated as such by Lester Wunderman in 1961¹³. From that moment on, the history of that term began. Until now many definitions have been developed for direct marketing, and this process will continue to reflect changes that will take place in the economy, but also in the theorists' ability to understand real phenomena.

⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_Marketing_Association_\(United_States\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Direct_Marketing_Association_(United_States))

⁹ https://dmachoice.thedma.org/static/learn_more.php

¹⁰ https://dmachoice.thedma.org/static/learn_more.php

¹¹ https://dmachoice.thedma.org/static/learn_more.php

¹² https://dmachoice.thedma.org/static/learn_more.php

¹³ <http://www.marketergizmo.com/direct-marketing-redefined>

Currently, there are many professional organizations which are concerned about direct marketing, both national and international, and some have federative representation. For example, **FEDMA AISBL - Federation of European Direct and Interactive Marketing**¹⁴ aims to defend and promote the interests of its members, through actions that need a regulatory environment, convenient for the development of direct marketing activities and through educational, information and training programs. FEDMA has developed its own *Ethics Chart concerning the management of personal data (Ethical Charter on Personal Data Management)* introducing simple rules, undertaken by members on personal data collection and management, respecting obviously, and applicable law. Personal data is the central database used in direct marketing campaigns, and its accuracy and complexity is a prerequisite for efficiency and success of direct marketing strategies and relationships between companies and their actual and potential customers.

The Charta promotes five ethical principles essential for proper management, ethical statement¹⁵: **Be Honest and Fair, Respect Individuals, Be diligent with personal data, Empower the customer with choice, Be Accountable**. Respecting the five principles, the organizations promoting direct marketing campaigns, assume to value clients' rights, including privacy and confidentiality (personal data must be collected according to law, only with the client's permission and their use can be done only with the purpose for which the customer has consented for).

4. CONCLUSIONS:

At the conceptual level, it is obvious that changes occur in the understanding of direct marketing, developments reflecting not only a better understanding of economic realities, but also their accelerated growth. The theorizing direct marketing must capture not only the complexity of the communication mechanisms involved in it, but also of the distribution mechanisms and remodeling costs. Due to the intensity and speed with which they can receive and process reactions of the market, the entrepreneurs that use direct marketing techniques and instruments may revise in a very short time, their production policies. Thus, the entrepreneur has the means of getting more effective management in the marketing mix.

Digital technologies have brought new sources of collecting market and consumer data (data that we send ourselves in the virtual world are public or may belong to third parties who have obtained our consent for commercial purposes use), but also new technological infrastructure for processing and storing them. It will be necessary in the future to amend legislation in favor of maintaining and guaranteeing the personal nature of data.

Maybe it will be necessary that those who use various forms of digital communication or applications to be warned when agreeing to share the contents of their communications for certain purposes use. Digital technology also allows instant and interactive communication with potential customers, edifying the role of the organizations that supervise and regulate the ethical, responsible and professional character of this new type of commercial dialogue.

¹⁴ www.fedma.org

¹⁵ http://www.fedma.org/fileadmin/documents/Legal_A_Eth_C/FEDMA_Charter_Ethical_Personal_Data_Management.pdf

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