ETHICS IN MARKETING - BRANDS MUST WORK WITH TRANSPARENCY AND CONSUMER TRUST

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Abstract: In this article, we consider ethical issues in marketing, with an emphasis on the need for brands to work with transparency and consumer trust. Special attention is paid to the practices of honest and open communication with the target audience, compliance with standards of social responsibility and consumer protection. In the face of increasing competition and increased consumer expectations, brands must not only offer high-quality products and services, but also maintain trusting relationships with customers.

Key words: ethics in marketing, brand transparency, consumer trust, social responsibility, marketing strategy, honesty in advertising, brands and customers, corporate responsibility, sustainable development, brand reputation.

Аннотация: В статье мы рассматриваем вопросы этики в маркетинге, с акцентом на необходимость работы брендов с прозрачностью и доверием потребителей. Особое внимание уделяется практикам честного и открытого общения с целевой аудиторией, соблюдению стандартов социальной ответственности и защите интересов потребителей. В условиях роста конкуренции и повышенных ожиданий со стороны потребителей, бренды должны не только предлагать качественные товары и услуги, но и поддерживать доверительные отношения с клиентами.

Ключевые слова: этика в маркетинге, прозрачность бренда, доверие потребителей, социальная ответственность, маркетинговая

стратегия, честность в рекламе, бренды и клиенты, корпоративная ответственность, устойчивое развитие, репутация бренда.

Introduction. In today's market, where competition is reaching its maximum and consumers are becoming more informed and demanding, brands face the need to strengthen their positions not only through the quality of goods and services, but also through ethical business conduct. One of the most important aspects of success is building and maintaining trusting relationships with clients. Ethical marketing based on transparency, honesty and social responsibility is becoming an integral part of the strategic approach of many successful companies.

Transparency in communication with consumers, clarity in the policy of prices and conditions of use of products, as well as openness in environmental, labor and social responsibility issues are the foundations on which brands can build long—term relationships with customers. Consumers are increasingly evaluating a company not only by its product, but also by its actions, commitment to honesty, and protection of the interests of society and the environment.

The main part. Ethics in marketing is not just about following legal norms or meeting quality standards. These are principles and actions aimed at honesty, openness and respect for the consumer. In a world where information is spreading rapidly and consumers are becoming more aware, brands that ignore ethical principles risk losing the trust and loyalty of their audience.

Transparency in marketing begins with honest communication. It is important that brands communicate information about their products and services clearly and unambiguously, including descriptions of their components, terms of use, and possible risks. The ability to talk openly about shortcomings and problems helps to reduce consumer dissatisfaction and prevent crisis situations. Transparency also includes price policy. Consumers should understand what they are paying for and which services or goods are included in the price. This not only

helps to avoid misunderstandings, but also helps to strengthen the company's reputation as an honest and open player in the market.

Ethics in marketing involves compliance with corporate responsibility standards, including environmental and social aspects. Brands should take into account the impact of their activities on the environment, strive to reduce the negative effects of production and consumption, and participate in social initiatives. Modern consumers prefer to choose those companies that care about social responsibility and sustainable development. An example is the introduction of environmentally friendly technologies into production processes or the support of social programs aimed at helping those in need. When a brand actively demonstrates its responsibility to society, it helps to increase customer confidence. Consumer protection is an important element of ethical marketing. This includes providing accurate and complete information about the product or service, as well as fulfilling obligations to customers. Problems such as inflated promises, hidden flaws, or unauthorized use of customer data can lead to serious reputational losses.

Consumer data protection is also an important aspect. In the context of digitalization, when personal data becomes a valuable commodity, companies are required to ensure a high level of information security and protect users from abuse.

One of the most striking manifestations of ethics in marketing is honest advertising. The use of manipulative techniques, deceptive statements, or exaggerations in advertising may be beneficial in the short term, but in the long run, such practices destroy the company's trust and reputation. An example of an ethical approach is an advertising campaign that honestly and openly presents a product or service, without using false promises or manipulating audience perception. This not only helps to establish long-term relationships with customers, but also strengthens the brand as a company that cares about its image.

One of the most important principles of ethical marketing is the desire to build long-term relationships with customers, not just for quick profits. Brands that focus on ethical practices focus on creating value for consumers and meeting their needs, not just sales.

This requires companies to be honest and respectful to their customers, as well as continuously improve their products and services based on their feedback. When a brand truly cares about its customers and strives to help them solve their problems, this leads to increased loyalty and, as a result, increased profitability in the long run.

Ethics in marketing is not a secondary element of strategy, but becomes an integral part of a successful business. Transparency, honesty, respect for consumer rights and responsibility to society form the basis for trusting and long-term relationships with customers. Modern brands that recognize the importance of these principles gain a significant competitive advantage in the market and are able to adapt to changing consumer demands while maintaining their reputation and sustainability.

Conclusions and suggestions. Modern consumers value honesty and openness in dealing with brands. Transparency in marketing communications helps to strengthen customer trust and loyalty. Brands that strive to provide consumers with complete information about their products and services, as well as honestly communicate any potential risks or limitations, gain a competitive advantage.

Ethics in marketing is not limited to honest advertising or frankness about prices. It is also important to take into account the social and environmental responsibility of the company. Consumers are increasingly focused on brand values, preferring to support companies that care about preserving the environment, respecting labor rights, and participating in social initiatives. Customers' expectations are becoming increasingly high regarding the protection of their rights and data. Brands that ensure a high level of data security, respect

consumer rights and honestly fulfill their obligations, strengthen trust and minimize the risk of reputational losses. Manipulating consumer perceptions through false or exaggerated advertising messages can lead to short-term success, but ultimately harm the company's image. Ethical advertising based on truthful information and real product characteristics contributes to the creation of stable and long-lasting relationships with customers.

Ethics in marketing becomes the foundation of successful brands striving for sustainable development and long-term customer relationships. Transparency, honesty and corporate responsibility are the values that should underpin marketing strategies in order to maintain consumer trust and succeed in today's competitive market.

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