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COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT IN THE ASPECT OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY

Sectors of the food economy create systems which existence is dependent upon effective communication. Due to a turbulent market environment they need information about customers, competitors or allies in order to create a trust atmosphere that will lead to increased interest in their products or service. Internationalization and globalization of the food economy postulate new communication needs, thereby emphasizing the role of communication in dealing with the environment in which the primary source of profit become the information and methods of their identifying and sharing. The authors undertook a study which, through concentration on communication management, fills a significant gap in literature dedicated to identification of a communication system in the aspect of a supply chain and as an element of strategies of food industry enterprises.

Keywords: communication management, food industry, food market, logistic, distribution.

Introduction. A lot of enterprises of the food industry underrate the importance of communication, while currently the key component of success in this industry is its image, which depends on how it is perceived, how it communicates with its environment, addresses arising problems and wants to develop.

Topicality of the subject results from the fact that food industry is still a large beneficiary of the integration with the EU. The good economic situation of agriculture and food processing continues, which is an effect of a significant support for agriculture income and a receptive European market that has opened up food manufacturers. The income-price effects of the integration are constantly decreasing. High dynamics of agricultural and food export is maintained, which leads to the increased domestic demand. There is production and investment upswing in the food industry. Moreover, the changing environment forces

enterprises to meet customers' needs. A company's presence on the market, survival and development depend not only on a well-qualified staff, but, above all, on a satisfied customer. Therefore, it is very important to analyse instruments that support active sale of products and to define and assess the tools for communication with the market which are used in the industry.

The prospects for development of the issues addressed in the paper result from the marketing aspect, which determines the art of communication and delivery of intended information to customers. Communication can be described as an art of being competitive and achieving advantage on the market. Thanks to an effective management of communication, i.e. selection of appropriate forms and means adjusted to the customer and impacting his / her understanding of the message, an enterprise is better perceived, recognised and valued. Its prestige and customers' trust grow only when the customer doesn't feel the cognitive dissonance between the promise made by PR and the actual service.

Skilful management of communication allows an enterprise to reach all customers from the target segment. Due to the specific character and situation on the market, enterprises from the food industry sector should particularly carefully choose the means and content of their communication. Through a full integration of different forms of communication, an enterprise should offer full transparency and reliability of its information. A coherent process of communication has a large impact on how an enterprise is perceived by customers. Thus, in constantly changing conditions of market competition, a developed system of communication, which uses advertising, sales promotion, public relations and the Internet, magazines and external advertising as well as lobbying, sponsoring and relations with media is one of the most important factors impacting a long-term success of an enterprise.

Further research will concern sales instruments that contribute to an effective communication of an enterprise with its environment, which determines its further development. Various instruments supporting sale and communication of a company with the market will be evaluated. Economic use and adaptation of available forms of communication represents a challenge on the one hand, while on the other hand – a great chance for dynamic development of an enterprise. A survey will be conducted on a group of people who are directly engaged in relations with the customer and have knowledge about communication activities undertaken in the enterprise. The aim of the survey will be to evaluate not only the staff's knowledge about enterprise's communication with the market, but also the way an enterprise implements communication with its environment.

Literature review. Communication management in this sector is significant for the development of enterprises, as an enterprise's strength lies in human resources (Woś A., 2006) [23, p. 22-40]. It is mainly employees that have impact on an enterprise and its image. Studies show that 70% of crisis situations at enterprises of the food industry are caused by employees' actions. Thus, it is concluded that creation of an enterprise's image should begin from inside. Care about good communication with employees will reduce the risk of crisis situations and will work to the benefit of the company [24, p. 148-160].

We cannot forget the fact that the most effective employee is one that feels bound with the company, identifies himself / herself with it and is involved in the decision making process. It is also important for an employee to feel that in case of any doubts his / her opinion will be listened to, and his / her problem solved. It is particularly important when changes are made in a company. Every enterprise introduces changes to keep up with the growing market and competition [14, p. 72-77]. Appropriate adaptation of an enterprise to a turbulent environment should involve preparation of employees for these changes, explaining why the changes are

being introduced. Effective management of communication in the period of introduction of changes will enable control of the actions that are undertaken and will reduce the risk of errors [22, p. 75].

Effective communication with employees gives an enterprise a range of benefits and reduces anxiety among employees. Creating a positive image of an enterprise outside, through a coherent system of communication management, results in increased loyalty of the staff and increased trust towards the top management. Effective communication will allow difficult issues to be explained to employees, which will increase their effectiveness. A satisfied employee will also promote the enterprise and employer outside, thus creating its positive image [2, p. 218].

Aims of the article. As globalisation implies social acceptance that takes place on the market and is reflected in the fact that offered services and products find their purchasers, the aim of the paper is to identify the process of communication, which involves gathering and providing information that will be properly used to create competitive products or services, with reference to the strategies of food industry enterprises from the application perspective.

The scientific aim of the paper is to relate the operation of enterprises to communication management determinants that impact their innovativeness and competitiveness.

The issues addressed in the paper are important due to the necessity to coordinate activities and processes taking place in the food chain, which determines strategic decisions on the food sector market.

Basic material.

Communication system as an element of the strategy of enterprises of the food industry. Communication should be regarded as fundamentally important for the development of entrepreneurship in the food sector. For every enterprise in this sector, an effective system of communication constitutes a basis for making crucial decisions regarding business strategy, with particular reference to [3; 13]:

- the food segment of the market and ways of increasing revenues from activity in this segment;
- improvement of the internal organisational structure of an enterprise and the increase in its productivity;
- implementation of innovations and innovative solutions to optimise economic processes and reduce costs.

Effective management of communication in this sector requires understanding the sense and principles of the communication process, and the impact of the internal and external environments on the information flow. This fact conditions the necessity of doing research into communication relations which enables analysis of the effective communication development.

Four basic elements play a fundamental role in the communication process [21, p. 141-144]:

- sender, i.e. a person who gathers, systematises and conveys information;
- message, which is usually information encoded by means of symbols;
- channel, i.e. medium through which information is conveyed;
- receiver, who is a person to whom information is addressed.

The above mentioned elements, inscribed in the communication process, enable creation of a range of dependencies expressed in development of ideas, encoding and choice of channels, transmission and decoding (Fig. 1).

The different stages of communication process are also limited by barriers which disturb

the correct reception of information as a result of imperfection of encoding, impact of interferences on the message and different interpretations of the same data. The above mentioned factors result in the content of the message being lost or distorted, thus negatively influencing the activity of an enterprise. Studies conducted by have shown that communication management in the food sector constitutes the main barrier on the way towards achieving effectiveness, with effective information exchange being one of the fundamental problems [15, p. 84-91].

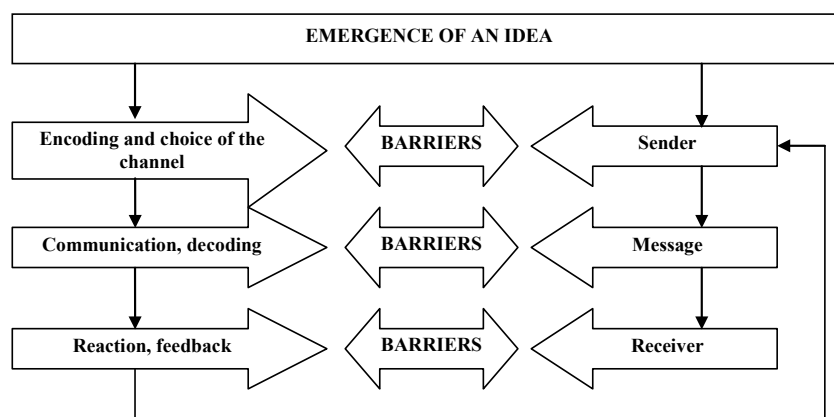


Figure 1 – Extended diagram of communication process (own work)

Effective communication in the area of the food industry should be based on accurately and comprehensively translated message, taking into account the behaviour of the sender and receiver showing understanding, friendly attitude and honesty during the conversation, which will enable establishment of eye contact (Fig. 2).

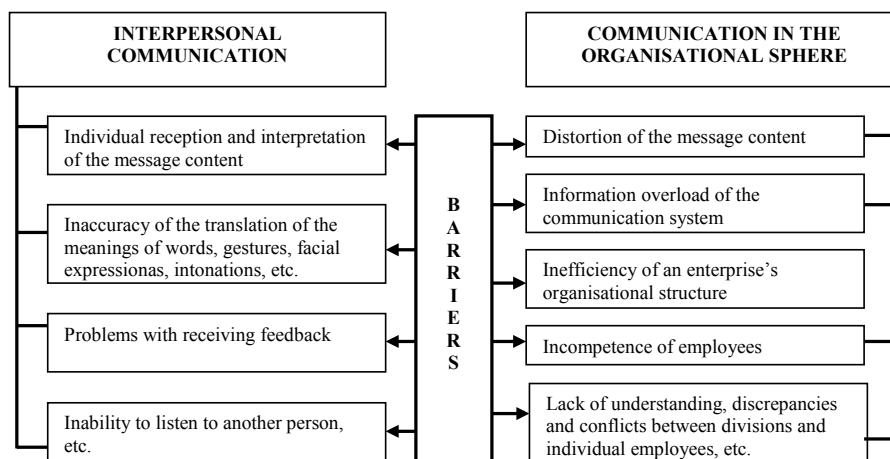


Figure 2 – Barriers to the creation of effective communication (own work)

Communication management will enable the creation of an effective communication

system which can ensure eye contact, which in turn will positively impact the coordination of information streams, leading to simplification of information exchange schema and creation of functional information system using modern technologies.

Eliminating the barriers limiting effective management of communication will allow consumers to be more efficiently informed about an enterprise's production, its advantages, characteristics and quality. Such activities will allow an enterprise to persuade consumers to decide in favour of its products and will shape and strengthen not only its positive image but also the image of its products on the market. Effective communication, especially in the food sector, will allow to conduct market analyses and obtain feedback about its state, which will be reflected in the right approach to managing mutual relations on the market and inside an enterprise, leading to establishment of mutually beneficial partnership relations with other economic entities [19, p. 19-30].

However, we cannot forget that the above mentioned actions require a marketing approach to effective management of communication, which in the sector of enterprises of the food industry necessitates the definition of requirements towards the participants of a communication process, including the data about the information that should be transmitted, persons responsible for the transmission of the message, receivers of the information, method or technology of transmitting the message, as well as communication frequency, principles for approving documents, schemas for problem solving and method for updating the process of communication management during its implementation. Effectiveness of the activities taken by enterprises operating in the sector of the food industry depends mainly on continuous improvement of communication system, which implementation will accelerate achievement of the goals through precise definition of the idea of the process of communication and its purposefulness in the process of analysis of the environment in which communication takes place, which will positively lead to the creation of a quality space of communication, necessary for the development of enterprises operating in the food industry.

Specific conditions of communication management in the sector of the food industry. As already mentioned, effective and smooth communication is one of the conditions of achieving goals at all levels of the activity of enterprises and of maintaining relations with the environment. Competitiveness of enterprises increasingly depends on the information obtained in the process of communication which at the enterprise level can be divided into external communication, which takes place between an organisation and its external environment, and internal one, which refers to interactions within a team of employees and the management of the enterprise. Communication management, as one of key tools that influence improvement of the implementation of basic functions of management, requires personalized, interactive, individualized and customer needs-oriented communication, which will allow the entities of the food sector to analyse, model and predict the behaviour of customers during planning and automation of personalised communication with customers. It should be stressed that communication management requires analysing characteristics and behaviour of customers in order to [9, p. 25-55]:

- define customer groups;
- explain the behaviour of customers;
- conduct segmentation of customers;
- identify the factors that drive customers.

An important element of communication management in the aspect of the food industry is communication with the customer, which will allow the customer's reactions to be predicted. Communication management basically refers to planning, gathering, processing, updating and

conveying information, which underlies the communication process. In enterprises of the food industry, efficient management of communication will enable efficient functioning and improvement of the flow of information which is necessary in taking decisions connected with health safety of produced or processed food [20].

When addressing communication management we cannot omit the issues that directly refer to the area of the food industry, including taking decisions regarding supply, production and distribution. The performance of all the activities takes place among producers that offer products adapted to consumer needs [6].

The sector of the food industry is a sector of products that are usually perishable, thus, it is necessary to maintain a supply chain and transport to guarantee unchanged quality of products [10]. Effective management of the communication process will enable appropriate organisation of the logistic process, including transport, and coordination of carriage.

Susceptibility of perishable food products determines the fundamental significance of communication, both in the sphere of distribution and sale of these goods. Therefore, the basic task of communication is to convey information such as the price, parameters, storage and warehousing conditions with regard to the infrastructure and potential threats. Thus, communication management requires transparency, which guarantees information flow and access. It is an appropriately constructed coaxing message with characteristics and attributes of an assortment [4; 8].

Integrated approach to communication processes may ensure market success to an enterprise and enable the achievement of a long-term market success. Communication of enterprises of the food industry requires interaction between the participants of the above-mentioned processes in the market conditions that dynamically create new needs [12].

In the conditions of unquestionable globalisation of the market, the predominant trend is the increase in the food industry enterprises' interest in the principles and practice of communication management, focused on adjusting their offer to market requirements and customer needs. Thus, communication management is an integrated system of planning, shaping and controlling the flow of goods taking into account information conditions, which will enable the motivation of the actors and such a coordination of actions that will ensure advantageous relations between the level of provided services and the level and structure of associated costs. The effect of these processes should be the satisfaction of customer needs, which will be reflected in their loyalty, will increase competitiveness as well as operational and strategic efficiency of an enterprise. The aim of communication management in the food industry sector is to create a system of effective information flow that will allow consumer needs to be met by means of efficient processes of communication [26].

In the processes of communication between enterprises of the food industry and the market, an important role is played by the function of managing the processes of distribution and sale taking into account product characteristics of the products on offer. Analysing the process of communication from the perspective of the distribution of goods, it should be stressed that it involves decisions and actions taken to ensure efficient management and communication between the suppliers and consumers of such products. Creating a formula of distribution understood as an element of the process of communication will allow to establish customer desired way of reaching customers and offering goods on the market. The decision making process with reference to communication with the market should take into account new forms of organising the sale. Increased availability of food products and the development of the forms and techniques of their sale influence the importance of distribution in the process of communication.

A distribution strategy in the sectors of the food industry is strictly correlated with a competitive strategy. The key position of distribution in communication management at enterprises from this sector results from the fact that due to the perishability of food materials and products the decisions in the area of communication management basically refer to the choice of transactional and physical channel of distribution. Appropriate communication in the area of performing delivery processes concerns the choice of a distribution channel and the choice of a strategy with regard to the degree of distribution intensity and strategic decisions in the area of logistics [5, p. 321-380].

The successive stages of communication management in the aspect of the food industry directly refer to distribution channels that involve the reception of goods, logistics of distribution, logistic outsourcing, as well as all activities that shape the processes of managing supply chains. Cooperation of the above mentioned factors based on modern principles of communication management will enable fast response to customer needs, unreliable customer service and maintaining appropriate relations with customers.

Knowledge and effective management of communication have become a key resource determining the creativity and functioning of enterprises from the sector of the food industry. These immaterial resources are connected with human actions and experience, and the process of communication may lead to such companies gaining competitive advantage. Communication management is a process based on identifying, acquiring and using knowledge to improve a company's competitive position, which is supported by leadership in a supply chain, by logistic organisational culture, technology of logistics and information system.

Cooperation in the integration of communication processes aimed at creating a coherent message will allow, on the one hand, customers to obtain the information they need, while, on the other hand – it will enable planning the production and supply of raw materials, forecasting the demand, planning and modelling the distribution network and optimisation of transport [8; 25].

The most important resource of enterprises of the food industry is potential, experience and knowledge of their employees, guaranteeing their uniqueness and competitiveness. Proper use of capabilities and motivation to cooperate will allow knowledge not only to be acquired and created but also disseminated. However, the prerequisite is effective management of communication. It is also necessary to develop certain standards for communication in enterprises of the sector of the food industry. In the case of this industry, there are various groups of employees due to different objectives set for the different departments. Communication as a subfunction of leadership becomes key to management. It should be understood as a process in which message is conveyed between the sender and receiver. It may be unilateral in a situation when instructions are given to follow and no reaction is expected from the receiver.

If however questions are asked, then the process of communication is bilateral and there is feedback. Globalization is inevitably connected with the necessity of a specific view of the processes of production and trade in the food industry. Increased competition, diversified food products, high requirements regarding appropriate quality of products, reliability and flexibility in their delivery as well as building customer trust and control of the processes taking place in the sector of the food industry require, first of all, effective management of communication. Transformation of the food industry and the accompanying commercial sphere impact the relations between the participants of the supply chain, starting from producers and ending with consumers [17].

Management of communication in a supply chain plays a special role in the sectors of the food industry, which is not only influenced by modern technologies [7, p. 88-96], but also changes in the expectations of the supply chain participants and the demand from customers whose increased awareness leads to increased importance of the processes of quality control and improvement and food security [1; 11]. However, none of the issues above can be considered separately as it requires commitment and cooperation of all the players in a supply chain. The functioning of a supply chain requires effective communication between the participants of the chain, starting from the producer and ending with the consumer. Appropriate management of communication in the supply chain is necessary due to the fact of meeting customer needs because a process of creating and strengthening communication between the participants takes place then, which may lead to achievement of common benefits. Supply chain in the sector of the food industry functions within a system which comprises suppliers, producers, distributors and buyers, among whom there is a flow of goods and information as part of an effectively functioning process of communication [18].

Effective management of communication in the sectors of the food industry is of strategic importance as it concentrates on the following areas [12]:

- market measures that oscillate around trade, logistics and marketing. Effective communication impacts the improvement of the quality of food products, food security, flow of products in supply chains and effectiveness of the transactions entered into;
- production processes where effective communication conditions control processes and optimisation of production processes;
- management, which mainly involves decisions that are taken at management level, which, supported by effective communication, improve the gathering, selection, processing and transmission of information.

Communication management will enable the improvement of contacts with customers and optimisation of customer service. The implementation of effective communication will also enable an individual approach to the customer in marketing actions. Effective communication has also an important impact on the price, distribution and promotion of food products, as problems connected with effectiveness of the above mentioned actions mainly refer to the aspect of the transmission of information because it is the transmission of information that becomes the basic factor in their development. Improvement of communication will lead to the increase in the degree of cooperation between players and clearly improve the sphere of supply, stock management, transport, processing of orders, relations with sellers and production planning.

Thus, communication management becomes an important tool for coordinating production plans with logistic operations and deliveries of goods. Communication in these areas will improve information exchange and cooperation between the participants of the supply chain through modification of orders, which in turn will lead to fast adaptation to changing demand and will enable the reduction of the costs of storage of goods and reduction of perishable goods. Further, we should stress the role of effective management of communication in such spheres as: broadening and improving the level of provided services and increasing flexibility of completion of deliveries.

As studies show, many countries have noticed the impact of effective management of communication on the efficiency of supply chains and reduction of delivery time. We should also stress the importance of communication in the processes of identification, use and assimilation of information resources, with particular reference to [16]:

- information exchange, which is the basic skill in a supply chain, understood as an

enterprise's ability to effectively pass knowledge to partners in the supply chain;

- coordination, which refers to products, financial resources and human work from the moment of starting production to completion of an order. Coordination in a supply chain enables reduction of transactional costs and improves operational effectiveness among the participants of the supply chain;

- integration of actions among the participants of the supply chain, which makes it possible to create a continuous process of entering into transactions treated as a whole;

- the supply chain's reaction to external factors caused by complicated market phenomena, which is possible only through close cooperation between the participants of the supply chain in the area of improving the information flow and shortening distribution channels.

Conclusions. Effective management of communication in the aspect of the food industry constitutes one of strategic elements of an enterprise's resources, playing increasingly important role and leading to increased competitiveness of enterprises that want to adapt themselves to the global tendencies of the civilisation development and regard knowledge and information as a strategic resource of an enterprise. Communication management, being within the area of interest of both marketing and management, means necessity of coordinating simultaneously a number of actions and processes in processing companies and in the food chain, which affects strategic decisions in logistic processes connected with manufacturing, distribution and trade, and also of shaping information processes on the market, as market success of enterprises of the food sector depends on their ability to reach end customers with the offer of food products through effective management of communication.

The prospect of future research will oscillate around the issues connected with sales instruments which support not only the sales but also a company's communication with the market. It is worth focusing on evaluation of knowledge on an enterprise's communication with the market, as well as addressing the issue of the way of a company's implementation of communication activities with respect to its environment in the marketing aspect, which determines the art of communication and delivery of intended information to customers, as a proper communication system is one of the most important factors determining success of an enterprise and impacting its competitiveness.

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Комунікаційний менеджмент в аспекті харчової промисловості

Сектор харчової промисловості – це складна система, існування якої значної мірою залежить від ефективної комунікації. Функціонування системи відбувається у турбулентному ринковому середовищі, яке вимагає відповідної інформації про клієнтів, конкурентів чи партнерів, що дозволяє створити атмосферу довіри та призводить до зростання інтересу до продукції чи послуг. Інтернаціоналізація і глобалізація економіки продовольства ставить нові вимоги до якості та рівня комунікативності підприємств, підкреслюючи тим самим роль технологій у відповідному середовищі, де основним джерелом прибутку стає інформація та методи її виявлення й перетворення. Авторами представлено дослідження з вивчення ефективності комунікаційного менеджменту, що має на меті висвітлення інформації не повною мірою представленої у сучасній літературі. Дослідження присвячено ідентифікації комунікаційних систем в аспекті ланцюга дистрибуції, що на думку авторів є основою ефективних стратегій діяльності підприємств харчової промисловості.

Ключові слова: комунікаційний менеджмент, харчова промисловість, продовольчий ринок, логістика, дистрибуція.

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Коммуникационный менеджмент в аспекте пищевой промышленности

Сектор пищевой промышленности – это сложная система, существование которой в значительной мере зависит от эффективной коммуникации. Функционирование системы происходит в турбулентной рыночной среде, которое требует соответствующей информации о клиентах, конкурентов или партнеров, что позволяет создать атмосферу доверия и приводит к росту интереса к продукции или услугам. Интернационализация и глобализация экономики продовольствия ставят новые требования к качеству и уровню коммуникативности предприятий, подчеркивая тем самым роль технологий в соответствующей среде, где основным источником прибыли становится информация и методы ее обнаружения и преобразования. Авторами представлены исследования по изучению эффективности коммуникационного менеджмента, имеющие целью освещения информации не в полной мере представленной в современной литературе. Исследование посвящено идентификации коммуникационных систем в аспекте цепи дистрибуции, которые, по мнению авторов, являются основой эффективных стратегий деятельности предприятий пищевой промышленности.

Ключевые слова: коммуникационный менеджмент, пищевая промышленность, продовольственный рынок, логистика, дистрибуция.

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