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STRATEGIC MARKETING VECTOR OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE PROJECTS IN THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY OF DIGITAL ERA

СТРАТЕГІЧНИЙ МАРКЕТИНГОВИЙ ВЕКТОР СОЦІАЛЬНО ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНИХ ПРОЄКТІВ В ЦИРКУЛЯРНІЙ ЕКОНОМІЦІ ЦИФРОВОЇ ЕПОХИ

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Abstract. *The article examines the strategic marketing vector of socially responsible projects operating within the framework of a circular economy in the context of digital transformation.*

The impact of digital technologies on marketing strategies aimed at promoting environmentally and socially oriented products and services is examined.

The possibilities of using digital tools for effective communication of the values of the circular economy and social responsibility, attracting consumers and forming long-term relationships are analyzed.

Key digital marketing approaches and technologies are identified for optimizing the strategic marketing vector of socially responsible projects in the digital era.

Keywords: *circular economy, social responsibility, strategic marketing, digital era, digital technologies, online consumer behavior, e-commerce, social networks, data analytics.*

Introduction. The digital era is radically transforming the business environment, opening up new opportunities and challenges for marketing. At the same time, the growing importance of the circular economy and corporate social responsibility (CSR) necessitates the integration of these concepts into companies' marketing strategies [1; 2]. Socially responsible projects that operate according to the principles of the circular economy have significant potential to create both economic and social and environmental value. However, effectively communicating this value to the digital consumer requires the development of an adapted strategic marketing vector that takes into account the specifics of the digital era.

The purpose of this article is the research within the context of strategic marketing vector of socially responsible projects in the circular economy in the conditions of digital transformation, identification of key digital approaches and technologies for their successful promotion and consumer engagement.



Analysis of recent publications on the research topic. Issues of strategic and marketing management of various circular business activity in digital era and many scientific publications, as well as discussions at conferences, in the Internet sites, on various forums and platforms are devoted to current discussions [1-14].

Main results of the study. In modern business conditions, the circular economy focuses on the cyclical use of resources, and CSR focuses on responsible business activities taking into account social and environmental consequences. The digital era, in turn, is characterized by the pervasiveness of digital technologies, changes in consumer behavior, and the emergence of new communication and sales channels [5]. The integration of these three aspects requires companies to rethink their marketing strategies for socially responsible circular economy projects.

We emphasize the fact that in the context of socially responsible circular economy projects, it is strategic digital marketing that should use the capabilities of the Internet, social networks, mobile technologies, data analytics, and other digital tools to effectively communicate the values of sustainability and social responsibility to the target audience. Therefore, strategic digital marketing is the process of planning, implementing, and controlling marketing activities using digital channels and technologies to achieve business goals [3; 4; 6].

It should be noted that in the digital era, strategic marketing of socially responsible circular economy projects should be based on the following key approaches:

1. Digital value-oriented communication, namely: using digital channels to effectively broadcast the values of circularity and social responsibility. This includes creating interactive content that demonstrates the environmental and social benefits of products and services, as well as stories about their positive impact. Personalized digital experiences, namely: using data analytics to understand consumers' online behavior, interests and values, in order to create personalized marketing messages and offers that meet their needs for sustainable and socially responsible products.

2. Digital community engagement, namely: building and activating online communities around the brand and its socially responsible initiatives in the circular



economy. Using social media to engage with consumers, engage them in discussions, receive feedback and create a sense of ownership.

3. Digital transparency and traceability, namely: ensuring transparency of information about the origin of materials, production processes, product lifecycles and their social and environmental impacts through digital technologies such as blockchain or QR codes. This increases consumer trust and confirms the authenticity of socially responsible claims.

4. Sustainable e-commerce, namely: the development of online platforms and e-commerce tools that facilitate the purchase and sale of circular economy products and services, emphasizing their environmental and social benefits. Optimization of online stores to demonstrate sustainable packaging, return and recycling options.

5. Use of digital influencers and brand advocates, namely: cooperation with opinion leaders and consumers who actively promote the values of sustainable development and social responsibility in the digital space, to expand audience reach and increase trust in projects.

It is suggested to clarify that the following key tools and technologies can be used to implement the strategic marketing vector of socially responsible projects in the digital era, such as:

- Big Data Analytics.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Social networks and messengers.
- Content marketing (in digital format).
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and contextual advertising (Pay-Per-Click).
- Email Marketing.
- Mobile Marketing.
- Blockchain and QR codes: Technologies to ensure supply chain transparency, track the life cycle of products and provide consumers with detailed information about their environmental and social impact.

It is also proposed to consider the impact on digital consumer behavior and online brand identity, as in the digital era, consumers actively search for information about



products and brands online, compare their values and make informed purchasing decisions [7].

Effective strategic digital marketing of socially responsible circular economy projects can significantly influence digital consumer behavior, contributing to the growth of demand for environmentally and socially conscious products.

It is also important that Ukrainian politicians, businessmen, and top managers are already guided by the principles of the European Green Deal, and the country's economic development vectors until 2030 also contain the main elements of its goals.

At the same time, Ukraine lacks a clear strategy for green and circular development of the economy, its industries and enterprises, which requires further theoretical research and practical implementation.

Thus, the leading developed world countries have come to the conclusion and realization that excessive involvement of natural resources in the life of humanity can become a serious threat in the future [4].

Moreover, consistent and authentic communication of circular economy values and social responsibility in the digital space contributes to the formation of a strong and positive online brand identity. A brand that is associated with sustainability, ethics and innovation has a better chance of attracting and retaining loyal customers in the digital era.

In general, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has long ceased to be just a fashionable trend and today it has become an integral part of a successful business model. Socially responsible projects implemented by companies not only contribute to improving the life of society, but also have a significant impact on economic sustainability.

Socially responsible projects contribute to the economic sustainability of economic entities, namely:

1. Improving the company's image and strengthening trust.
2. Creating new markets and business models.
3. Increasing production efficiency.
4. Strengthening social capital.



5. Reducing risks.

Therefore, socially responsible projects not only contribute to improving the life of society, but also have a significant positive impact on the economic sustainability of companies in a circular economy. They allow to increase competitiveness, create new business models and strengthen long-term relationships with stakeholders. Social responsibility becomes not just a moral imperative, but a smart business decision.

Social responsibility, regardless of the level and scale of research, is determined at the global, national, regional and production levels.

The global level reveals the content of social responsibility through the identification of problems and conditions of human existence and the search for ways to solve them through the spread of social integration aimed at ensuring sustainable development regardless of place of residence and race. Sustainable development implies a balanced development of economic, environmental and social systems and their simultaneous ability to self-regulate and reproduce.

According to international experience in implementing sustainable development, the greatest success on this path was achieved by those countries that applied tools and mechanisms that contributed to compliance with certain restrictions, overcoming significant obstacles, introducing new standards, regulations, etc. The most influential lever on the path to implementing sustainable development was social responsibility.

Social responsibility is an expression of will, which is determined by a certain behavior regarding compliance with conscious restrictions and social norms, guarantees security and progressive development, ensures coordination of interests of subjects involved in social relations and their management.

Thus, social responsibility is multifaceted and multilevel. It manifests itself at the personal (individual) level through the degree of civic maturity of the individual and is basic for other levels. Its manifestations at other levels depend on a person's worldview and awareness of his significance in world transformations, on his desire for transformations in all spheres of his life.

At the group level, social responsibility is defined as corporate social responsibility:



- at the social level, it implies the social responsibility of society for a decent standard of living of current and future generations;
- at the state level, it determines the best ways to achieve sustainable, social and human development;
- finally, at the global level, social responsibility outlines the priorities of world development, human civilization due to international agreements on the implementation of sustainable development, as well as the UN Global Compact.

The world community has developed a system of standards and recommendations for the implementation of sustainable development, namely: the ISO 14000 standard in the field of environmental management systems, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) - recommendations for reporting in the field of sustainable development, the international standard for social responsibility ISO 26000, ISO 9001:2015, etc. [10-12].

Sustainable development has been identified by the UN as the main direction of civilization development in the 21st century. Ukraine is among those states that have undertaken to introduce the principles of sustainable development into the economic system.

The researches of the Institute of Industrial Economics of the NAS of Ukraine conducted a number of expert surveys to implement the budget theme “Social Factors of Sustainable Development of an Industrial Region”, in particular, they investigated the issue of positive changes in the implementation of socially responsible actions for sustainable development in Ukraine (Table 1).

Social responsibility and social security are inextricably linked. Social responsibility is a guarantor of social security in general and personal human security in particular, a means of maintaining and strengthening social harmony, the integrity of society, the state.

Thus, the implementation of the principles of sustainable development in the country can be achieved by modernizing management systems and social relations on the basis of social responsibility, when motivational mechanisms for socially



responsible behavior in this area of the individual, society, business, and the state are involved.

Table 1 – Assessment of the positive effects of socially responsible actions in the implementation of sustainable development principles in Ukraine, %

What positive changes will occur with socially responsible actions in implementing the principles of sustainable development in Ukraine?	
Careful attitude to the environment, rational consumption and use of natural resources	65,8
Social, economic and ecological balance and development	57,0
Strengthening the health of the population, increasing life expectancy and labor activity	44,3
Activation of socially responsible activities of the state, society, business, and individuals in forming conditions for sustainable development	43,7
Establishment of a coordinated system of values and spiritual and cultural development of human society	43,7
Use of resource-saving technologies in production	40,5
Modernization of social relations, consolidation of efforts of society and authorities in ensuring sustainable development	39,2
Formation and implementation of a consumption model in accordance with the principles of sustainable development	26,6
High rating of Ukraine in terms of sustainable development in international comparisons	12,0
Other	3,2
Difficult to answer	1,9

Source: compiled by the author based on [8].

Socially responsible projects not only contribute to the improvement of society, but also bring significant benefits to business. Let us consider in more detail how such projects affect the attraction of investments, the formation of a reputation, and the increase in customer loyalty, namely:

Attracting investments: - Attractiveness for investors: Investors are increasingly paying attention to the social responsibility of companies. Investing in a company that cares about society and the environment is perceived as more reliable and ethical.



- Long-term sustainability: Socially responsible companies demonstrate their resistance to long-term changes and risks, which makes them more attractive to investors who are focused on the future.

Building a positive reputation: - Positive image: Social responsibility helps create a positive image of the company in the eyes of consumers, partners and employees.

- Differentiation from competitors: Socially responsible initiatives help to stand out from competitors and take a leading position in the market.

- Reducing negative publicity: Actions aimed at improving society help to neutralize negative publicity and protect the company's reputation.

Customer loyalty: - Emotional connection: Social projects help to create an emotional connection between the company and customers, which increases loyalty.

- Brand loyalty: Customers who share the company's values become more loyal to the brand and are willing to recommend it to others.

- Willingness to pay more: Consumers are often willing to pay a higher price for products and services of companies that care about society.

Additional benefits: - talent attraction and retention, cooperation with government and the public, business sustainability, because social responsibility helps ensure long-term business sustainability, as companies become more resilient to economic and social shocks.

It is also known that an effective strategy focuses on what makes users constantly return to your product, and on the value that they receive from your brand and cannot get anywhere else. So, the attraction strategy creates a base of customers, and the retention strategy builds relationships with them and their main differences are presented in Table 2.

The main sources of income for companies, according to the survey, are: customer retention — 52%; customer acquisition — 45%; product updates — 30%; new sales strategies — 30%; price changes and promotion strategies — 24%; new sales channels — 19%; technological advantages — 16%; entering new markets — 11%. Therefore, customer retention is a set of tools that a business uses to increase revenue and the number of regular customers. Retention tools allow to benefit from existing customers.

**Table 2 – Customer acquisition strategies**

	Retention strategy	Attraction strategy
Future customer value	Accurate ROI assessment due to customer data	Situation modeling
Identifying customer needs	Collecting information during interaction with customers allows you to correctly set goals for marketing activities and predict sales figures.	Situation modeling
Duration of interaction	The company's profits have been growing steadily over a period of time.	The return on investment will gradually decrease. The period of time, a customer will continue to buy products, depends on the business sector
Indicators in the short term	Small part of total profit. It is difficult to predict the effect in the long term	Big profit in a short period of time, but considering the size of the first purchase in monetary terms, the time of repurchase - they characterize the future value of the customer

Source: compiled by the author based on [8; 9; 14].

Let's compare Internet marketing with football: the team that successfully applies attack and defense strategies simultaneously wins on the field. If we transfer this to the field of marketing, then retention is a defense strategy, and acquisition is an attack strategy. Retaining regular customers allows you to maintain high positions in the market, and the ability to simultaneously attract new and retain old customers is a sign of effective work that forms a positive reputation [8; 9; 14].

To sum up, corporate social responsibility is not just a fashion trend, but a strategically important component of a successful business model. It helps companies not only achieve financial goals, but also make a positive contribution to the development of society, especially circular one, in digital era.



Conclusion.

The strategic vector of socially responsible projects is a key element of the successful transition to a circular economy. Integrating social aspects into projects aimed at efficient use of resources and waste minimization not only contributes to achieving environmental goals, but also creates significant social value. The implementation of socially responsible practices in a circular economy is strategically beneficial for business, helping to increase competitiveness, strengthen reputation and contribute to the sustainable development of society.

The digital era opens up new horizons for strategic marketing of socially responsible projects in a circular economy. The use of digital technologies and approaches allows companies to more effectively communicate their values, attract consumers, build long-term relationships and form a strong online brand identity. The key elements of a successful strategic marketing vector are digital value-oriented communication, digital community engagement, digital transparency and traceability, sustainable e-commerce, use of digital influencers. Further research could be aimed at studying the effectiveness of various digital marketing tools and strategies for promoting socially responsible circular economy projects in different industries and taking into account the specifics of digital behavior of different consumer segments.

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Анотація. У статті досліджено стратегічний маркетинговий вектор соціально відповідальних проєктів, що функціонують у рамках циркулярної економіки в умовах цифрової трансформації.

Розглянуто вплив цифрових технологій на маркетингові стратегії, спрямовані на просування екологічно та соціально орієнтованих продуктів і послуг.

Проаналізовано можливості використання цифрових інструментів для ефективної комунікації цінностей циркулярної економіки та соціальної відповідальності, залучення споживачів та формування довгострокових відносин.

Визначено ключові цифрові маркетингові підходи та технології для оптимізації стратегічного маркетингового вектора соціально відповідальних проєктів в цифрову еру.

Ключові слова: циркулярна економіка, соціальна відповідальність, стратегічний маркетинг, цифрова ера, цифрові технології, споживча поведінка онлайн, електронна комерція, соціальні мережі, аналітика даних.

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