

Discursive Strategies in Online Promotion

Cezara Barbeș

Abstract: *The paper entitled “Discursive Strategies in Online Promotion” exposes aspects related to online promotion using different types of discursive strategies. Considering the spectacular development of the World Wide Web, but also the time spent on the whole in the virtual environment, online promotion should be used by all companies, no matter the field. The main objective of this paper is to highlight the need and efficiency of online promotion, by analyzing some methods and strategies used in promotion campaigns. Firstly, we will present and apply the advertising campaign plan on the product promoted. Secondly, we will focus on some types of online advertising suitable for our product, and thirdly, we will design a form of advertising message, based on the objectives already established in the advertising campaign plan.*

Keywords: *online promotion, advertising, promotion campaign, newsletter.*

1. Introduction

In the last years, the online environment has become increasingly more accessible and used by customers. In addition, the facilities offered to Internet users are in a continuous development. Among the wide variety of services provided by the virtual environment, we mention

the possibility to shop or close transactions online. Furthermore, the Internet offers specialized tools for online communications, e-learning, e-commerce, e-health, e-governance services, it provides access to large amounts of information and not least, it is the largest source of entertainment. Therefore, most people spend a lot of time connected and are more exposed to the online information than to the printed one. Similarly to the development of the other services mentioned above, the continuous development of online promotion is crucial for the advertising industry. In light of the above, this paper aims to draw attention to the importance of online advertising and to the discursive strategies used in online promotion.

2. Research method

In our research, we aim to discover the best and most effective ways to promote MASTERCOM, an open access journal that gathers the scientific contributions of the MA students in Communication, Public Relations and Digital Media from the Faculty of Communication Sciences, Politehnica University Timișoara. Its main goal is to disseminate early or in-progress research findings in the fields of communication and digital media, and to foster further research.

In order to establish which are the most suitable methods and strategies for the online promotion of the journal, we will refer to a promotion campaign for the MASTERCOM journal, but also to a social campaign for joining an idea: the campaign aims to induce or change student behavior towards the idea of publishing. Therefore, in order to determine students to publish and to raise their interest in this type of activity, I intend to focus on the best online communication products and methods that can be used in order to achieve the goal of our promotion campaign.

My research focuses on analyzing the email, the newsletter and the discussion group as promotion methods. These methods of online promotion were chosen following an analysis of several types and

examples of online communication used by companies, magazines and websites in various fields.

My research has led to the conclusion that, as forms of advertising, all these messages should be created using promotion strategies and creative or interactive elements that attract users' attention, stimulate their interest and make them act in accordance with the main goal of promotion: buying the product.

An efficient advertising email or newsletter should have some fundamental elements, such as:

- Catchy title – the element that draws most attention and usually, the first information read from the entire article;
- Interesting subject – the subject line is as important as the title, being the first piece of information that the user will see when receiving the advertising message; if the subject is catchy enough, the reader will go through the entire email;
- Appropriate greeting – any message that addresses the user directly has a greater impact than messages for which the addressing formula is missing;
- Relevant information – as a part read usually by the clients interested in the subject or the offer received, the message must be clear, concise and as short as possible, structured into paragraphs if necessary;
- Creative aspect – a promotion message that has visual elements can have higher efficiency than a simple email;
- Closure – as important as the introduction, the closure message usually synthesizes the main idea and urges the reader to take an attitude towards the promotion message.

Having a different structure, the discussion group has other distinctive elements, such as regulations, discussion topics proposed by moderators, messages or posts from other participants, etc. However, the main characteristics mentioned for email and newsletters also apply to discussion groups.

Following the analysis carried out on these three forms of online communication, we have developed a promotion campaign plan that "will propose concrete actions to be taken in order to achieve its objectives" (Dagenais, 2003: 57).

The research method used for the implementation of the promotion campaign plan is the detailed analysis of each of its components or stages (Dagenais, 2003: 58-59):

- Problem identification
- Situation analysis
- Definition of objectives
- Specification of target audiences
- Establishing the communication axis
- Strategy identification
- Techniques, media channels and useful media proposition
- Message elaboration
- Budgeting and timing
- Development of monitoring and evaluation tools

Therefore, our main action focused firstly on an extensive analysis of each stage mentioned, each of them being analyzed in close connection with the product in question, the MASTERCOM journal, and with the goal we pursue. This activity has led us to write and design the promotion campaign plan called "Ace up the Sleeve".

3. Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;">PROMOTION CAMPAIGN PLAN</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ ACE UP THE SLEEVE ♠</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Designed for: FACULTY OF COMMUNICATION SCIENCES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Made by: Cezara BARBEȘ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">20th of April 2018</p>

The goal of the campaign "Ace up the sleeve" is to raise students' interest in publishing scientific articles.

As it requires thorough research and study, writing such papers is a net benefit for students, and can be the "ace up the sleeve" in their professional career.

The purpose of the campaign title is to determine students to associate it with a poker game. Just as there is always someone who has better cards among the poker players, the student will have an advantage over other colleagues or competitors on the labor market due to his/her scientific work. Therefore, as the ace cards grant or facilitate the win for the poker players, the MASTERCOM journal is the "ace up the sleeve" for students, offering the proper environment to capitalize their research work.

Given the recent publication of MASTERCOM, the journal is not very well-known among students and graduates. This promotion campaign aims to increase the popularity of MASTERCOM and the visibility of the product in the online environment. In addition, upon completion of the Master's degree, a very small percentage of students consider continuing their studies and moving towards research work. In order to develop students' interest in publishing, the MASTERCOM journal offers the possibility to publish scientific articles, in which students present the results of the research undertaken for the dissertation paper.

This promotion campaign has the following objectives:

- Promoting MASTERCOM among students;
- Raising students' interest in publishing scientific articles in the journal;
- Developing students' interest in scientific research.

The target audience of the "Ace of the Sleeve" campaign has been chosen according to common interests and studies followed:

- Graduates in Communication, Public Relations and Digital Media;
- Master students (1st and 2nd year) majoring in Communication, Public Relations and Digital Media;

- Undergraduate students majoring in Communication and Public Relations.

The topic of the promotion campaign for MASTERCOM is "Ace up the Sleeve". The metaphor defines the publication itself and the benefits of publishing scientific articles in the journal. Thus publishing in the MASTERCOM journal is an advantage, a step forward in the research activity, by getting familiar with scientific paper writing and analytical thinking, and by acquiring early experience in publishing.

Considering the amount of time that students spend online and the ease of information transfer in electronic format, we chose to run "Ace up the Sleeve" as an online promotion campaign. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, my objective was to find the most suitable and effective way to promote the MASTERCOM journal among students. As it targets a small group of people working in the same field and sharing the study field and major, the most effective promotion technique is email advertising, particularly direct mailing, newsletters and discussion groups.

In what follows, we will focus on one promotion technique of the MASTERCOM journal – the newsletter – pointing out and analyzing the information that it should contain. Newsletters are printed or electronic documents containing information about the recent activities of an organization, sent regularly to members of the organization. As the purpose of the newsletter is to make an announcement, it will focus on the campaign message "Ace up the Sleeve" and on the following objectives:

- Launch the news;
- Persuade the students that their implication is needed;
- Inform the students that they will receive more details soon;
- Describe the journal briefly.

Thus, the topic is the release of the new number of MASTERCOM and its goal is to incite the students to start the research work for the articles that they can publish. The newsletter will contain

written and visual information; it will be designed using the online tool Canva and sent directly from the application (<https://www.canva.com>). This newsletter will be forwarded at the beginning of the year to the majors Communication and Public Relations, and Communication, Public Relations and Digital Media.

Next, the students will receive direct emails with all the details needed (e.g. informative aspects, templates to be used, publishing requirements, recommendations for editing scientific articles, where they can find the journal, etc.). In addition, as it proves to be a very useful method, the students will receive messages designed as reminders, concerning the time left until the publication of MASTERCOM, so that they are urged to begin the research work. The direct emails and the reminders will be designed using the online tool Mail Chimp.

This scientific journal is the result of extensive research, carried out following the thorough study of a large number of bibliographical resources. The theoretical issues studied – digital communication, online advertising, persuasive discourse – helped me to better understand the concepts of public relations, the links between them and the analysis on which this research is based.

4. Conclusion

In a world where people spend more time online than enjoy the non-digital environment, online advertising has become a must. Along with online communication and publicity, online promotion, marketing strategies, promotion campaigns and others, it ensures the product's visibility in the virtual environment.

As MASTERCOM is a journal addressed to students, who represent the highest percentage of people present online, it is mandatory to use the techniques provided by today's digital media. Moreover, with the new apps and software available, the digital environment offers endless possibilities, creative marketing solutions and interactive promotion techniques, which are far more effective

than traditional advertising and easier to disseminate to the target audience.

To sum up, I consider that the online media are the future of marketing, advertising and promotion. With such digital techniques and strategies, the MASTERCOM journal will definitely raise students' interest and the promotion campaign "Ace up the Sleeve" will achieve its goals.

Bibliography

1. Dagenais, B. *Campania de relații publice*, translated by Surugiu R. and Surugiu G., Polirom, Iași, 2003
2. Preda, S. *Introducere în creativitatea publicitară*, Polirom, Iași, 2011
3. Suciu, L. *În căutarea sensului: de la analiza discursului la design-ul comunicării*, Orizonturi Universitare Timișoara ; Casa Cărții de Știință Cluj-Napoca, 2014.
4. Vegheș Ruff, I., Grigore, B. *Relațiile publice și publicitatea online*, Polirom, Iași, 2003

Webography

1. <https://sc.upt.ro/ro/mastercom> (accessed on 19.04.2018)
2. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/an-ace-up-your-sleeve> (accessed on 22.04.2018)
3. <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/newsletter> (accessed on 22.04.2018)
4. <https://www.canva.com> (accessed on 25.04.2018).