

The Belarusian language as a marketing tool in advertising

Advertising plays a key role in modern business, acting not only as a tool for promoting goods and services, but also as a strategic factor contributing to the development and successful operation of companies. In the conditions of high competitiveness in the market, effective advertising becomes a necessity for achieving commercial success and long-term sustainability of business. And advertising in Belarus is no exception.

With the development of digital technologies, Belarusian companies receive new opportunities for promotion, using social networks and Internet platforms for more effective interaction with the audience. Thus, in 2023, advertising placement entailed the largest expenses on the following platforms: internet (110.7 million rubles); television (50.1 million rubles); outdoor advertising (22.3 million rubles); radio (20.2 million rubles); press (1.2 million rubles). A special feature is that Belarusian companies actively use social and cultural elements, which helps strengthen ties with consumers and create a positive brand image. Additionally, the use of the Belarusian language is an integral part of many advertisements.

The purpose of this paper is to show that the Belarusian language can become a key point to attract more customers.

The historical context of Belarus has significantly influenced the development of language use and self-awareness among its people. The historical past of Belarus has had a significant impact on the development characteristics in a negative way, and despite the presence of two official languages, modern Belarusians practically do not use the Belarusian language in everyday life. According to the latest population census of 2019, 5,094 million Belarusians consider Belarusian to be their native language (this is approximately 53.2% of the population). However, 2.447 million people (only 26%) speak it at home and in everyday life. The authorities in Belarus use Russian, and documentation is mainly in Russian.

However, recently Belarusian marketers have actively started using the Belarusian language for their marketing and PR campaigns. The international agency for social and marketing research MASMI conducted a survey to find out how residents of our country feel about advertising in the Belarusian language. The 2023 study showed that 39% of respondents have a positive attitude towards advertising in the Belarusian language (most often in the age group from 55 to 64 years). Half of the respondents are neutral towards such advertising, 9% expressed their negative attitude. More often than others, women and the age group from 55 to 64 years agree with the statement “I respect companies that create advertising in Belarusian”. More often than others, the age group from 45 to 54 years agrees that advertising in Belarusian has a better chance of being remembered. In the age group from 55 to 64 years, more often than others, advertising in Belarusian is considered native, sincere and close.

Since in this survey, in which people aged from 18 to 64 took part, the younger generation responded least positively to advertising in the Belarusian language, we decided to conduct our own research and find out the reasons.

According to the survey, in which 82 people (from 18 to 25) took part, 59% have a positive attitude towards such advertising, 39% are neutral and 2% are negative. The main reasons why the young population preferred the Belarusian language in advertising are national identity (69.5%), support of local producers (47.6%), easy perception (15.9%). The key reason for the neutral and negative attitude towards advertising is its lack of relevance and modernity - 40%. 25% consider advertising modern, 45% find it difficult to answer. The second important reason is the rarity of advertising in the media. 63.4% of respondents rarely encounter advertising, 28% sometimes, 8.5% never. 79% of respondents noted that the duration of advertisements is short. Most often, advertising in Belarusian is noticed on billboards and street advertising (63.4%), television (54.9%), the Internet (37.8%), and social networks (35.4%). However, 56.1% believe that more such advertising is needed, 32.9% found it difficult to answer, and 11% expressed dissatisfaction.

Famous examples of advertising in Belarusian for domestic and foreign brands are “Сытны сняданак – тое, што нас аб’ядноўвае” from McDonald's, “Краіна Вітаміна”, “Смачныя прапановы” from the Euroopt chain of stores, “Дзерці бульбу? Няма дурных!” in the advertisement for the BOSCH combine harvester. The Alivaria brewery produces its products with packaging in the Belarusian language, and for its 160th anniversary they advertised their products with the slogan “Выдатнае піва беларусаў”. Special attention should be paid to the Belarusian brand Mark Formel, which released two clothing collections “#МОБАГЭТАКТЫЛІЁБА” and “From Belarus with Love” with various creative inscriptions in Belarusian. Velcom became the gold medalist of the “Brand of the Year” for popularizing the Belarusian language. The project “Reading in Belarusian with Velcom” was aimed at popularizing the Belarusian language: famous athletes, writers and actors conducted lessons for more than 11 thousand schoolchildren in the Gomel, Brest and Grodno regions.

In conclusion, several key points can be noted regarding society's attitude towards advertising in the Belarusian language: the majority of people express a positive attitude towards advertisements that are presented in Belarusian, which is associated with its ability to strengthen national identity and cultural values. Advertising in the Belarusian language is perceived as more sincere and heartfelt, which helps to create an emotional connection between brands and consumers. The use of the Belarusian language in advertising supports local producers and creates a sense of unity and belonging to the culture.

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ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL CULTURE IN PROMOTING BELARUSIAN BRANDS

The term ‘branding’ emerged in the late 19th century when industrial and technological advances led to mass production. Companies began to use marketing tools, including branding, to differentiate themselves from competitors and attract the attention of customers. [1]

The purpose of our research is to explore how cultural and historical symbols can strengthen brand identity and its relations with consumers. The relevance of the topic is provided by the increasing interest in ethnic uniqueness and local authenticity in the context of globalization. Thus, the work aims to discover effective methods of integrating national elements into brand strategies.

Consumers form a brand image based on the name (e.g. Mark Formelle and INSHY), ornaments (e.g. Brest Meat Processing Plant), packaging (e.g. Kommunarka) and shopping experience. A brand includes a name, sign, symbol or a combination of these that helps to identify the goods and services of a single producer and distinguish them from competitors' products. Branding of Belarusian companies plays an important role in their development and competitiveness in the international market. Companies that focus on the use of cultural elements and national symbols are gaining the greatest popularity among young people. [2]

Within the framework of the research seventy five people were interviewed to reveal specific preferences in product selection. The focus was on elements such as inscriptions and pictures on packages and product itself. It turned out that the majority of young people pay attention to graphic design and inscriptions, giving importance not only to functionality but also to the visual appeal of the product. At the same time, the use of national symbols in product design proved to be popular among individuals: about 78% of respondents said that the presence of national symbols and themes on packaging positively influences their choice. This emphasizes the importance of cultural identity in young people's consumer preferences.

Why are inscriptions in the country's national language in particular demand? The majority of respondents said that using the native language in marketing and production of goods helps the brand to establish an emotional connection with consumers and evoke a sense of national pride. It also demonstrates respect and understanding of local traditions and preferences, which helps to increase loyalty and trust. Phrases and slogans in the native language are easier to remember and associate with the brand. This enables brands to stand out from competitors and create a unique image in the market. Many popular