

## CREATION AND PROMOTION OF ALIBABA'S COMMERCIAL BRAND AS A COMMUNICATIVE STRATEGY

*The article deals with the ways of creation and promotion of a commercial brand using example of a successful Alibaba Group Internet commerce company communicative strategy. The overview of the communication activity based on a corporate website and of advertising and PR campaigns is given.*

**Key words:** mission and vision of the company, brand logo, brand cultural values of the company, multi-level and multi-channel penetration.

*В статье описываются коммуникативные возможности продвижения торговой марки на примере Алибаба Группы. Подобранный аутентичный материал, включающий анализ информации сайта компании, PR- и рекламных кампаний, структурирован для описания коммуникативной стратегии одной из наиболее успешных компаний Интернет торговли.*

**Ключевые слова:** миссия компании, логотип компании, культурные ценности бренда компании, многоуровневое и многоканальное воздействие.

Alibaba Group (Chinese 集团) is a Chinese public company operating in the field of Internet commerce, the owner of the web portals Taobao.com, Tmall, Alibaba.com and several others. The main activities are B2B trade between companies and online retail; it also owns one of the world's largest cloud computing infrastructures and media and entertainment assets.

To start speaking of the event-management communicative strategies of Alibaba Group we need to make analysis:

- 1) of a corporate web-site of Alibaba Group (mission, vision, brand culture, symbolic integration, brand logo and the like);
- 2) of advertising and PR campaigns of Alibaba Group.

### **The analysis of a corporate web-site of Alibaba Group**

Currently, Alibaba's web-sites include Alibaba B2B, Taobao, Alibaba Cloud, Yahoo China, and Juhuasuan. Alipay is an affiliated company, and Taobao has been split into three companies, Taobao, Tmall, and Yitao. Although each subsidiary has its own business focus and its culture has certain differences and uniqueness, they all take «the world without difficult business» as their mission and «Six-Medical

Sword» as their core values and source of motivation. This method of cultural construction not only gives the subsidiaries a lot of free development space, but also helps the group culture to achieve a unified and different realm.

The 18-person entrepreneurial team has developed into the world's most successful e-commerce cluster after twelve years, turning e-commerce from a concept into a trend-leading business form. The success of «Alibaba» is of course inseparable from «hard power» such as technology as a guarantee. However, the construction and dissemination of unique brand culture also played a key role, and it can even be said to be the soul of brand building. Interpretation and research on the creative construction and dissemination of «Alibaba» brand culture can provide certain ideas and inspirations for the brand development of local enterprises, which is of great reference value. Driven by its mission and values, Alibaba Group has formulated a development strategy of «cultivating an open, collaborative and prosperous e-commerce ecosystem». In this ecosystem, Alibaba Group, as an e-commerce operator, provides various basic services for many small and medium-sized enterprises.

A good brand name itself is the most concise and direct slogan, which can quickly and effectively express the central connotation and key associations of the brand. Many people have heard the story of «Alibaba and the Forty Thieves». The bravery, wit and kindness of the alien boy Alibaba left a deep impression on people [1, p. 55].

**Brand logo.** Good brands have rich connotations, and brand logos are one of the carriers that express this rich connotation. Brand logos are generally consistent with brand characteristics and reflect the connotation of the brand to the greatest extent possible. Alibaba's brand logo contains multiple connotations. The main color of the Alibaba brand logo is orange, which symbolizes passion and vitality. The theme pattern is a letter «a», which happens to be the first letter of Alibaba's Chinese pinyin and English name (alibaba). Hidden in the letter «a» is a profiled face with a raised head. The corners of the mouth are raised and a smile is very confident, which symbolizes the confident and optimistic attitude and spirit of Alibaba Group. The auxiliary pattern is the website «Alibaba.com» of the English official website of Alibaba Group, which shows Alibaba's open attitude and lofty international vision.

Alibaba's smile logo, like Alibaba's English name, starts and ends with «a» in the West.

There can be seen number one, which means excellence, and at the same time it symbolizes the beginning and the end of Alibaba. There is also a meaning, that is, the smiling face of user satisfaction. Therefore, this logo conveys the user's feeling after using the product, or in other words, expresses the user's praise and motivation for Alibaba's customer first service philosophy.

***The Mission of Alibaba Group — «Let the world have no difficult business».***

Jack Ma, Chairman and CEO of Alibaba Group, has talked about Alibaba's culture in many public occasions, and the most mentioned is Alibaba's mission and values. Jack Ma believes that what Alibaba does is centered on the mission of «making the world easy to do business», and Alibaba will not do anything that goes against the mission [5, p. 12].

Alibaba regards "making the world without difficult business" as its mission. This is not only the goal of all employees, but also the main basis for its brand strategy deployment. Alibaba started from B2B to set foot in C2C to create Taobao; from the massive acquisition of Yahoo China, the establishment of Alibaba Software, to last year's cooperation with Zhejiang Post to build a logistics system.

***Values of Alibaba Group — «Six-Medical Sword».*** There is a value system called the "Six-Medical Sword", which specifically refers to: *customer first, teamwork, embrace change, integrity, enthusiasm and dedication*. Values are a concept of business management. Common values can make employees have a higher sense of identity and belonging to the company, thereby enhancing the internal cohesion of the company. One point in Alibaba's core value system is unique and different from many other companies, and that is «embrace change». For most companies that are on the right track and are beginning to make profits year by year, they reject change, or even fear change, and companies that do better can only adapt to changes at best. Alibaba proposes to «embrace change», which is a realm of very innovative spirit, courage, and it is also a manifestation of a sense of crisis. Jack Ma once mentioned in his internal speech: Embracing change is to create change continuously [3, p. 10].

***The communication strategy of «Alibaba» brand culture.*** There is a process of communication from the enterprise to the customer from the inside to the outside of the brand. The purpose of communication is to meet the needs of customers and at the same time make customers have the perception and recognition of the brand from the image to the connotation. This kind of communication process is closely connected with the corporate values and the internal culture of the brand at a deep level.

The brand communication strategy of «Alibaba» is very original. Emphasizing culture is better than emphasizing brand. There are so many things «Alibaba» is determined to make customers feel the connotation of Alibaba brand culture in every contact with Alibaba through the internal penetration and inheritance of culture such as mission and values. This kind of communication and promotion method that emphasizes all-round contact, customer experience and from the inside out has a certain commonality with some well-known brand communication models.

**Internal communication: multi-level and multi-channel penetration.** The internal dissemination of brand culture refers to the highly consistent coordination of all internal members of the company based on the positioning of the brand culture, and through various communication channels, the coordination of various business links with the brand, that is, the same body and mind. «Alibaba» has invested a lot of effort in the internal communication of brand culture. The person in charge of Alibaba's Orange Sky TV station believes: only when the culture is really made within the company, can culture be manifested in our words and deeds, and can make the audience feel that we are really a cultured, different from other brands. Indeed, in order to grow the brand and make the brand evergreen, the internal communication of the brand culture is very critical. Only with this step can the culture be passed from the inside to the outside [4, p. 45].

**Training — both rigid and flexible.** Training is one of the main ways for Alibaba to pass on its culture, and it is also the main way for Alibaba to enhance internal cohesion.

Alibaba has a series of trainings with different positioning according to the level and function of employees, such as Ali Party School, Ali Night School, Ali Class, Ali Night Talk, Organization Department, etc. which employees can choose according to their actual needs. And corporate culture training, such as Bainian Ali, Bainian Taobao, etc. is a must for every employee.

**Advertisement film-brand narrative talks non-stop.** The brand narrative is like an invisible link, ingeniously connecting the brand's core value concept to be expressed by the brand with the emotion of the audience and gaining the recognition of the audience through cultural and spiritual communication. Brand narration is one of Alibaba's classic strategies for external communication of brand culture. For example, Alipay's advertising film. Whether it is a public service advertisement launched in 2007 or a brand promotional film launched in 2019, they have put aside the shackles of tradition. There are no gorgeous shots and no ups and downs, but emotional appeal, to convey to the audience the idea of building an «integrity» society. The 2019 Alipay brand promotion film is even more maverick. It is based on two stories about «what is a promise», and it tells the truest kindness and the most precious integrity of ordinary people. Alipay CEO Peng Lei interpreted: «Knowing and trusting» is our promise to our customers and our own requirements. «Knowing» is for us to listen to, and «entrusting» is the responsibility on our shoulders [1, p. 32].

**Public relations — the battle of «attacking» and «defending».** «Xihu Lunjian» is a classic work of Alibaba's public relations planning, which not only quickly launched Alibaba's brand in the mainland the popularity has enhanced the brand influence. The success of «Xihu Lunjian» is not only due to the gathering of celebrities in the industry, but also because it has well demonstrated to the public

the Internet spirit of openness, equality, collaboration and sharing. Riding on the east wind of «West Lake on the Sword», Alibaba has organized many related large-scale public relations activities, such as «Internet Business Conference» and «Online Trade Fair». No matter how the form of the event changes, Alibaba always adheres to the spirit of open sharing and builds a valuable communication platform for the public. If it is said that special public relations planning is a visionary strategic layout of an enterprise that requires the company to have the ability to proactively «attack», then a crisis is a battle that the company is forced to face, and it tests the company's «defense» ability and adaptability [2, p. 9].

**Typical character events reduce the sense of distance.** When it comes to Alibaba, everyone naturally thinks of Jack Ma. He successfully jumped from an ordinary English teacher to a world-renowned entrepreneur, using his unique experience and ideas to write legends for Alibaba. It can be said that Jack Ma has become a unique brand spokesperson for Alibaba, and the public can perceive Alibaba's brand culture and connotation through Jack Ma's words and deeds. If Jack Ma is a window for the public to learn about Alibaba's brand culture, then Ali people are an important channel for the outside world to experience Alibaba's brand culture, because the public obviously has more opportunities to contact Ali people than they have access to Jack Ma, and Ali people Ma Yun's mental outlook and demeanor are more sensible than the «god man» like Jack Ma.

«The Most Beautiful Mother» Wu Juping Yong picked up the fallen child and used her arms to prop up a miracle of life that touched many people. As an employee of Alibaba, Wu Juping's charity has been affirmed by Alibaba Group. This is not only Alibaba's care for employees, but also an expression of appreciation and support for employees' kindness, integrity, and selfless dedication. This is a value orientation for all Ali people. Although it is difficult to say that employees' charity is inevitable with the company, it is undeniable that the company's culture has a subtle influence on employees. Assuming that they work 8 hours a day, employees may stay at the company longer than they stay at home. In the long run, the impact of good corporate values on employees has a positive meaning for the entire society.

**The examples of the events of Alibaba Group.** In 2009, Jack Ma personally celebrated the «Double Eleven» festival. Since then, people across the country have embarked on a more happier road of «hand-cutting». The turnover of Double 11 has ranged from 50 million yuan in 2009 to 168.2 billion yuan in 2017, just nine years have increased 3364 times.

In 2014, Jack Ma established a charity foundation named after him, taking the first step towards charity development.

In 2015, Jack Ma became the president of Lakeside University and launched the «Ma Yun Rural Teachers Program», working hard for the improvement of rural teachers' treatment.

***Join hands to fight the epidemic.*** The beginning of 2020 does not seem to be very good, but it is very friendly. When one party is in trouble, all parties support, this sentence is once again highlighted! How did Ali assist the epidemic? At the end of March 2020, Ali has invested a total of 3.356 billion yuan; at the end of June 2020, Ali has donated more than 200 million medical supplies to more than 150 countries and regions around the world.

***Public welfare out of poverty.*** In 2020, Alibaba Charity, Alipay Charity and 3-Hour Charity Platforms gathered nearly 500 million people to participate in charity projects. In addition, Ali has another major innovation: the Poverty Alleviation Specialist.

The advent of the Internet era makes everyone want to use the Internet to achieve their careers. Ali is not limited to this, but also pioneered the «Internet + poverty alleviation» method. Among them, the «Poverty Alleviation Commissioner» is Ali's first model of helping rural poverty alleviation. Most of these poverty alleviation commissioners are veteran employees who have worked for more than 10 years and know how to help farmers friends on the spot [4, p. 34].

## References

1. Alibaba Group: «Alipay Knowing Entrustment», «Ali People Pictorial» (Cultural Unit), Issue 1, 2012.
2. Editor-in-Chief of Alibaba Group. Ma Yun's Internal Speech — Beijing: Hongqi Publishing House, 2010.
3. Shanting, Zhang and Yandan, Li. Effective Brand Communication / Zhang Shuting and Lu Yandan — Beijing: Communication University of China Press, 2008.
4. Yu Yangming and Dai Shifu. Brand Culture / Yu Yangming and Dai Shifu -Wuhan: Wuhan University Press, 2008.
5. Zhu, Fu and Ma, Yun. Said This — The Business Truth of China's Top CEOs / Zhu Fu, Ma Yun — Beijing: China Economic Publishing House, 2008.