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## **APPLICATION OF MODERN BRAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES ON THE INTERNET**

This article examines the reasons for the formation and development of a modern brand strategy on the Internet. The author analyzes the basic approaches to the definition of Internet branding and proposed own interpretation of this phenomenon; shows the importance of Internet branding in marketing activities of any company; researches its main characteristics and features, as well as reasons of expediency to apply Internet branding by modern companies and enterprises.

The article also studies reasons, which promoted popularization of the Internet in trade of goods and services. The main tendencies of change of consumer preferences and activation of consumer behavior on the Internet were determined. Also, the main stages of promoting the Internet-brand by marketing tools were highlighted.

**Keywords:** branding, Internet branding, target audience, consumer preferences, online space, marketing tools, Web space, e-commerce market.

**Statement of the problem.** Traditional marketing nowadays is characterized by intense dynamics of development. Companies aiming to effectively compete in the market, gain leadership and increase sales in the long run, are forced to seek new, efficient and at the same time cost-effective methods and forms of business. At the same time, in order to increase competitiveness on the global market, it is vitally important for leading brands and trademarks, in addition to usual and, mostly, inefficient forms of business, to create new programs and promotion strategies for implementation in the web-world. This approach would not only resolve issues of positioning but would also help to create the image of a modern company and provide a global presence on the market. The issues mentioned above determine the relevance of this paper.

In addition, on the Internet, in comparison with offline business environment, the process of replacing old markets with new ones is much faster, thus new niches, segments, and opportunities arise all the time.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Considering the importance of adaptation of modern strategies on brand development and promotion in the Web space, essential features and individual principles of Internet branding were studied in the works of foreign scientists, in particular: D. Aaker, K.L. Keller, F. Kotler, N. Stansky, and others. Ukrainian and Russian scholars also joined the research; the problem was studied by E. Kliueva, A. Danyliuk, S. Ladik, I. Uspenskyi, Yu. Bodiaeva, R. Vezhel, V. Serov, S. V. Karpova, A. A. Ivanov, A. M. Godin, O. Nebylytsia, A. Starostina. Nevertheless, despite a large number of publications on the results of research, they cover mainly one aspect of the general problem. There is a need to study and examine the proposed direction in a complex way from the standpoint of modern marketing communications or alternative opportunities for promoting brands in new market segments, as the necessary condition for the existence of a modern brand in the minds of consumers, which allows maintaining curious and interactive connection with a target audience.

**The purpose of the article.** The purpose of the article is to analyze approaches to the definition of Internet branding and, consequently, to offer author's interpretation of this phenomenon in view of the complex nature and peculiarities of its use by companies for brands' and trademarks' promotion within the Web space, as well as identify the prospects of Internet branding on the path to creating a sustainable image of a modern company and ensuring global presence on the market.

**Presentation of the basic material.** The opportunities offered by the Internet are not limited only to communication tools; it also gives opportunities for wide positioning of goods and services. The Internet is a global, virtual electronic market that does not have any territorial or time constraints, that allows people to interactively buy goods (services) while expanding company's ability to promote those goods (services).

Using the Internet as one of the elements of branding has a positive effect on a company's image and on consumer's awareness of its products and services<sup>1</sup>.

Contemporary development of the Internet by opening new strategic opportunities has a significant impact on the development of branding. Interactive sharing of information on the global network allows finding new prospects and opportunities for trademark and brand owners. The multimedia activity of the Internet provides long-term bilateral interrelations, stimulates high activity of real and potential consumers and creates conditions for quick reaction to change of consumer preferences.

In the classical sense, branding is creation of a system of values relative to a particular product, product line or brand.

We may say that branding is the activity aimed to create a long commitment to a product on the basis of joint influence on a consumer by means of advertising messages, trademark, packaging, materials for sales promotion and other elements of communication, united by a certain idea and design, which distinguish this product among competitors and create its image. Branding unites creative efforts of an advertiser, advertising agency, trading companies and intermediaries in the widespread influence of brand-image (a personified positive image of the trademark based on scientifically substantiated findings of marketing research) on the consumer consciousness.

Branding helps: to support planned sales volume in a specific market and to implement a long-term program for creation and consolidation of a product's image in the minds of consumers; to ensure increased profitability as a result of expanding the range of goods and knowledge of their overall unique qualities, implemented through a collective image; to transmit in promotional materials and campaigns the culture of a country, region, city where a product is made; to take into account the demands of consumers for whom it is intended, as well as features of a territory where it is released; to use three factors important to reach an audience: historical roots, national mentality, current realities and forecasts for the future.

Brand promotion on the Internet, also often referred to as Internet branding, is a modern channel not only for support and development but also for formation of a brand. There are many approaches to the interpretation of this concept. The main are considered in Table 1.

However, all abovementioned definitions highlight only separate features of the concept and, in our opinion, are not complete. Consequently, based on represented scientific approaches, we would like to offer our own definition of Internet branding. Internet branding is a modern marketing interactive technology aimed at creation, promotion, development, and support of a brand in the communicative Web space by attracting additional target audience in order to increase its loyalty and create a positive image, grow profitability, competitiveness, and development of new market segments.

Additionally, S. Ladik identified that Internet branding can be divided into three main stages. Firstly, it is familiarizing users with a product or service and ensuring that a brand is recognizable. Secondly, steps to create a positive image of a brand, and thirdly, support of a positive image. Each stage has its own characteristics, and means to achieve marketing objectives at each stage are quite diverse<sup>2</sup>.

Certainly, we may identify at least two main reasons for the feasibility of using Internet branding by companies:

1. The development of digital technologies. Formation and development of the market of goods and services are actively influenced by development of Internet marketing. There are no geographical and time constraints within the online market, so the time for searching for business partners, exchange of information, and decision-making is reduced. The digital capabilities allow monitoring and regulating personal relationships with consumers within the framework of CRM-programs (Customer Relations Management), media information services actively develop.

2. Changes in consumer preferences. The results of numerous studies prove the fact of decline in the efficiency of use and promotion of brands in general, increase in a buyer's sensitivity to the price and service, in contrast to interest in the image. Confirmation of this tendency is the development of a system of author's approaches (for example, a design approach in the interior, handmade in clothing, tuning in the auto industry, etc.). In general, we can talk about the instability of purchasing benefits. Consumers are increasingly abandoning prestigious expensive and well-known brands in favor of new<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Иванов, А.А. (2013). *Брендинг: учебное пособие*. Комсомльск-на-Амуре: ФГБОУ 8ПО «КНАГТУ», 34.

<sup>2</sup> Ладик, С. (2011). Первые шаги в интернет-брендинге. *Маркетинг и реклама*, 1 (173), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Карпова, С.В. (2011). *Современный брендинг: монография*. Москва: Издательство «Палеотип», 83.

The main approaches to formation of the concept of Internet branding

Wikipedia – the free online encyclopedia <sup>1</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> (or <i>e-branding</i> ) – is a brand management through Web technology that allows bringing brand's ideas to a wider audience in the shortest time, including development of a brand name, trademark, informational basis, positioning model and a strategy for promotion of the future brand, as well as legal registration of a trademark and commercial names (of products or services), which help to avoid various manifestations of plagiarism in the future.
E. Kliueva <sup>2</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> (or <i>e-branding</i> ) – is a relatively new for CIS-countries marketing term that covers the whole range of activities related to the creation and promotion of a new or existing brand on the Internet.
A. Danyliuk <sup>3</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> – is a complex and currently more effective process than traditional branding; by right becomes an independent marketing technology of a modern enterprise.
S. Ladik <sup>4</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> – is a specially elaborated set of marketing measures aimed at familiarizing the audience with a product or service that is being promoted, and increasing the loyalty of potential customers to that product or service.
N. Stansky <sup>5</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> – promising technologies for promoting interests of a state in the information environment through the use of various tools provided by the World Wide Web.
I. Uspenskiy <sup>6</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> – is the theory and methodology of marketing in a hypermedia environment.
Yu. Bodiaeva <sup>7</sup>	<i>Internet brand</i> (e-brand) – is a set of characteristics of a product (service), determined by the following parameters: rather informative content of a website and the correct tone of a dialogue with a consumer; personification of advertising messages to a particular consumer, depending on their social and demographic portrait; a high degree of usability (i.e. ease of use) of the Internet resource.
R. Vezhel <sup>8</sup>	<i>Internet branding</i> – is a digital representation of a brand, which development and management occurs in the communicative environment of the Internet.

As a means of communication, the Internet has unique properties compared to traditional media. As a result, companies that use it to promote their own brand can fully realize these benefits to maximize customer satisfaction.

Peculiarities of this process are: the possibility of interactive communications, requiring a transition from simple presentation of information to the implementation of more mobile and dynamic communication with consumers, transition from unilateral type of communication to a bilateral; high

<sup>1</sup> Вікіпедія. Всесвітня електронна енциклопедія. <<https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Інтернет-брендинг>>.

<sup>2</sup> Ключева, С. (2015). Интернет-брендинг как инструмент маркетинговых коммуникаций. *Электронный научный журнал*, 2-3. <[www.pathofscience.org](http://www.pathofscience.org)>.

<sup>3</sup> Данилюк, А. (2011). Бренд в Интернете, или особенности коммуникативной среды. *Управление компанией*, 12, 9–12.

<sup>4</sup> Ладик, С. (2011). Первые шаги в интернет-брендинге. *Маркетинг и реклама*, 1 (173), 69–73.

<sup>5</sup> Штански, Н. (2012). E-branding: новые технологии для продвижения в сети Интернет. *Дипломатический вестник Приднестровья*, 8. <<http://vestnik.mfa-pmr.org/index.php?newsid=197>>.

<sup>6</sup> Успенский, И. (2003). *Интернет-маркетинг: учебник*. Санкт-Петербург: Изд-во СПбГУЭиФ.

<sup>7</sup> Бодяева, Ю.В., Гавриленкова, А.В., Григорян, М.С. (2011). Интернет-бренд: сущность и особенности. <[http://www.rusnauka.com/14\\_NPRT\\_2011/Economics](http://www.rusnauka.com/14_NPRT_2011/Economics)>.

<sup>8</sup> Вежел, Р.Ю. (2016). Наукові підходи до визначення сутності та принципів функціонування бренду в Інтернеті. *Сучасні медіа комунікації: прикладний аспект: збірник матеріалів інтернет-конференції*. Маріуполь, 7-10.

dynamics of the environment requires constant development of the means used, including techniques and tools; wide opportunities for providing information in the form of text, graphics, sound, video, animation, put before companies a task of maximizing the implementation of these opportunities, taking into account the specifics of proposed goods (services); the presence of different communication models requires to choose the most suitable model for interconnection with each consumer in accordance with their needs; consumers receive a greater degree of control and freedom of choice, expanding access to more differentiated information; creates an environment of relative anonymity and user safety<sup>1</sup>.

Proceeding from the above, we can also say that brand communication as a marketing tool for promoting Internet branding also has a number of advantages which include: the possibility of conducting specialized actions taking into account interactive capabilities of a computer; promptness – the possibility to quickly respond to changing consumer confidence and the possibility of active feedback; convenience – the possibility to quickly obtain, process and distribute information from one workplace while maintaining interactivity; completeness of the information provided (the volume of advertising information is unlimited, and any user can independently regulate the amount of consumed information); the ability to measure and analyze the effectiveness of an advertising campaign in figures; low cost compared to traditional advertising, low entry threshold or market segment; targeting – the possibility to individualize an advertisement, depending on the user's preferences.

In addition to the advantages, it is also important to identify disadvantages of brand communication. These disadvantages include: limitation and peculiarities of an audience – despite the high communication capacity of modern society, unfortunately for various reasons the Internet connection is not available to everyone; different efficiency of online promotion for companies depending on the specifics and forms of doing business – there is no single algorithm for success, and for the effective management of brand promotion it is necessary to attract qualified specialists; high cost per one contact compared to traditional media<sup>2</sup>.

The important thing is that as the number of active online users increases, the picture of their purchasing preferences changes. In addition, the significant influence on the growth of curiosity towards goods and services of famous brands represented in online stores was made by general difficult economic situation in a country, when consumers were able to compare price proposals and choose the most advantageous for themselves not yielding the qualitative characteristics of products.

The mode of an economy for modern society is more relevant than ever, and it is not only about saving money but also about saving time and efforts aimed at finding a product, so we can say that there is a positive trend towards increasing of online trade. Even in spite of falling consumer revenues in dollar terms, in the national currency in 2017 the e-commerce market even grew up. The situation in this segment is regularly monitored and analyzed by various companies, whose reports allow us to understand what Ukrainians buy online and how they make such purchases.

In July 2017, Google released a Consumer Barometer report that analyzed the behavior of online users from different countries, including information on the nature of purchases in online stores. Thanks to this document, a number of interesting facts became known, namely<sup>3</sup>: Ukrainians make online purchases more often than residents of other eastern European countries, such as Poland and Romania; more than 90% of all purchases are made from a computer, and the share of mobile devices in this indicator is less than 10%; 38% of Ukrainian online users at least once a year make a purchase in any foreign online store, but 45% never bought anything from abroad and the main deterrent factor is the language barrier; 76% of users compare alternative products to one another, and 70% read advice for choosing a product.

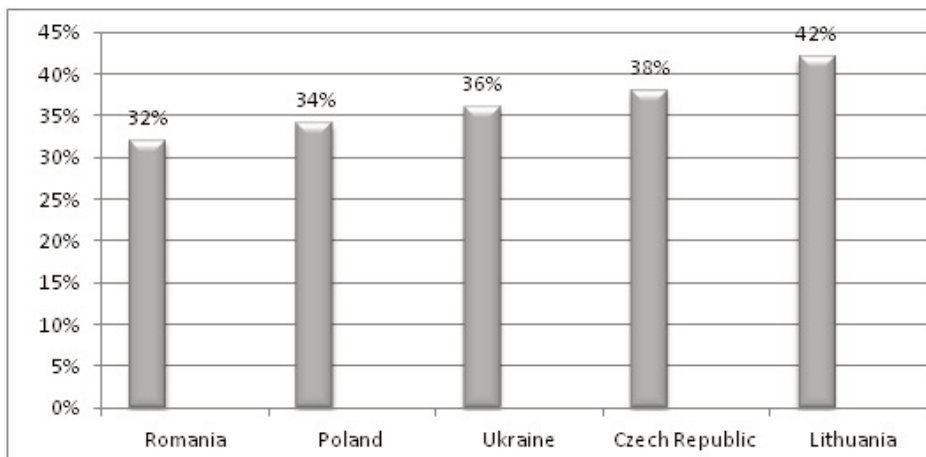
In the study, it was also reported that in 2017 the proportion of those who already make purchases in online stores increased to 36% of the total, which is consistent with the average indicators for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Figure 1).

Countries were chosen for comparison based on their socio-economic, demographic, cultural and psychological indicators similar to Ukraine.

<sup>1</sup> Годин, А.М. (2013). *Брендинг: учебное пособие*. 3-е изд., перераб и доп. Москва: Издательско-торговая компания «Дашков и К», 78.

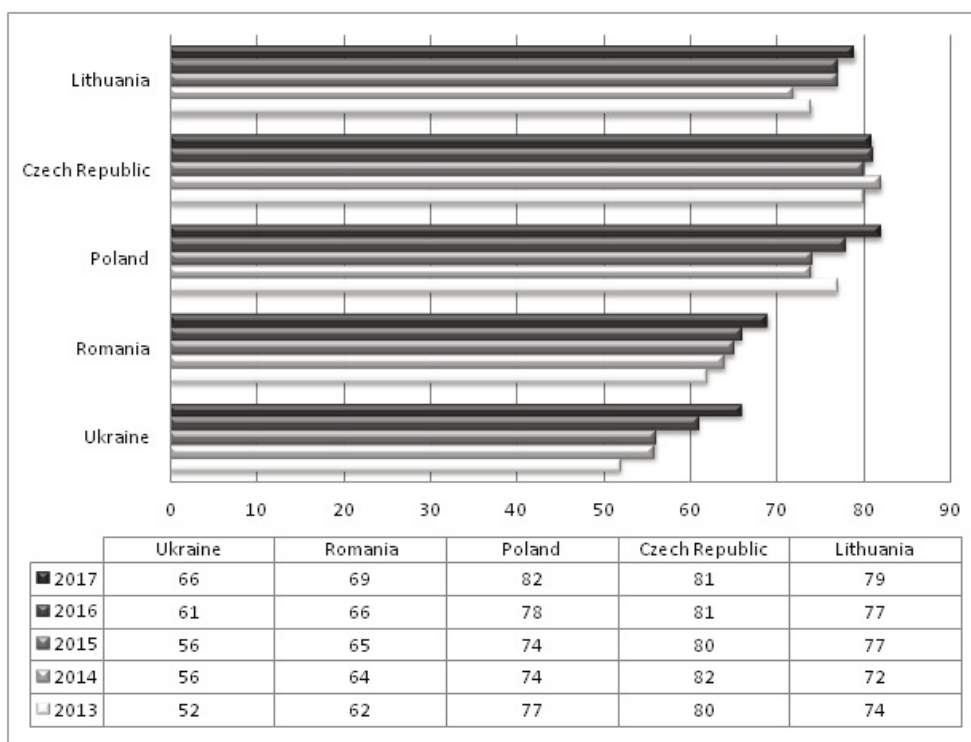
<sup>2</sup> Иванов, А.А. (2013). *Брендинг: учебное пособие*. Комсомльск-на-Амуре: ФГБОУ 8ПО «КНАГТУ», 36.

<sup>3</sup> Дослідження поведінки онлайн користувачів. *Consumer Barometer with Google*. <<https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending>>.



**Figure 1. The share of online users who make purchases on the Internet. Designed by the author on the basis of research<sup>1</sup>.**

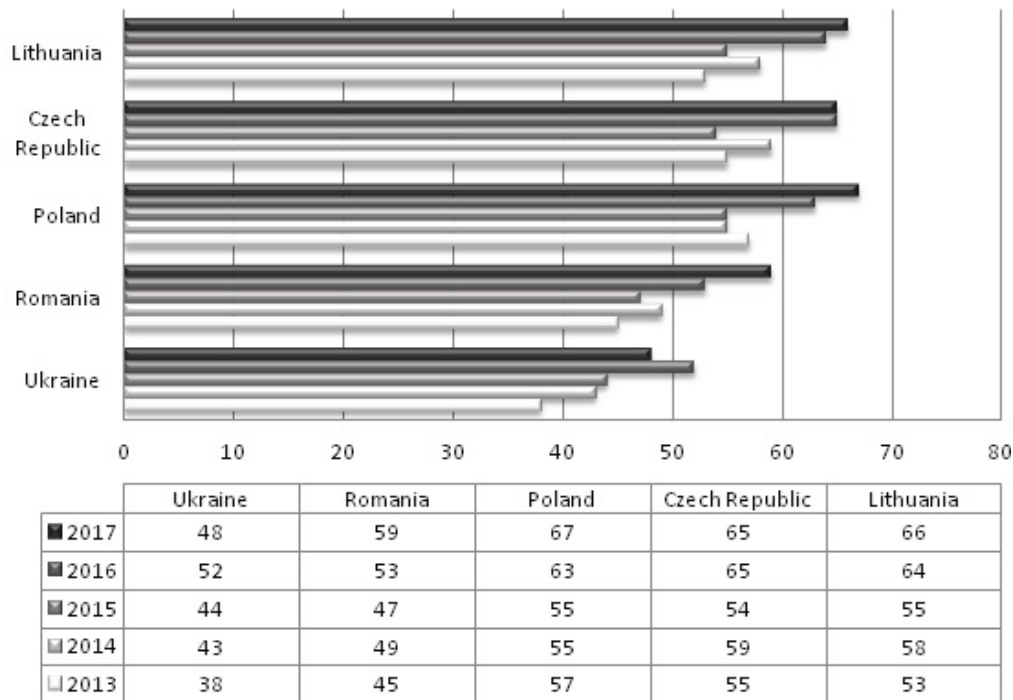
We may say that along with other countries in the region, the Ukrainian e-commerce and Internet commerce market has a good potential for growth, as the number of Internet purchasers in Ukraine in 2017 exceeded the mark of 3.5 million people. At the same time, an increase of 1 million was observed over the last three years. Indicators of such growth can be indicators of the change in the number of people who communicate on the Internet (Figure 2), as well as the number of people who use the services of the network on a daily basis (Figure 3).



**Figure 2. The dynamics of the number of people who communicate on the Internet (in %). Designed by the author on the basis of research<sup>2</sup>.**

<sup>1</sup> Дослідження поведінки онлайн користувачів. *Consumer Barometer with Google*. <<https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending>>.

<sup>2</sup> Дослідження поведінки онлайн користувачів. *Consumer Barometer with Google*. <<https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending>>.



**Figure 3. The dynamics of changes in the number of people who use the Internet on a daily basis (in %). Designed by the author on the basis of research<sup>1</sup>.**

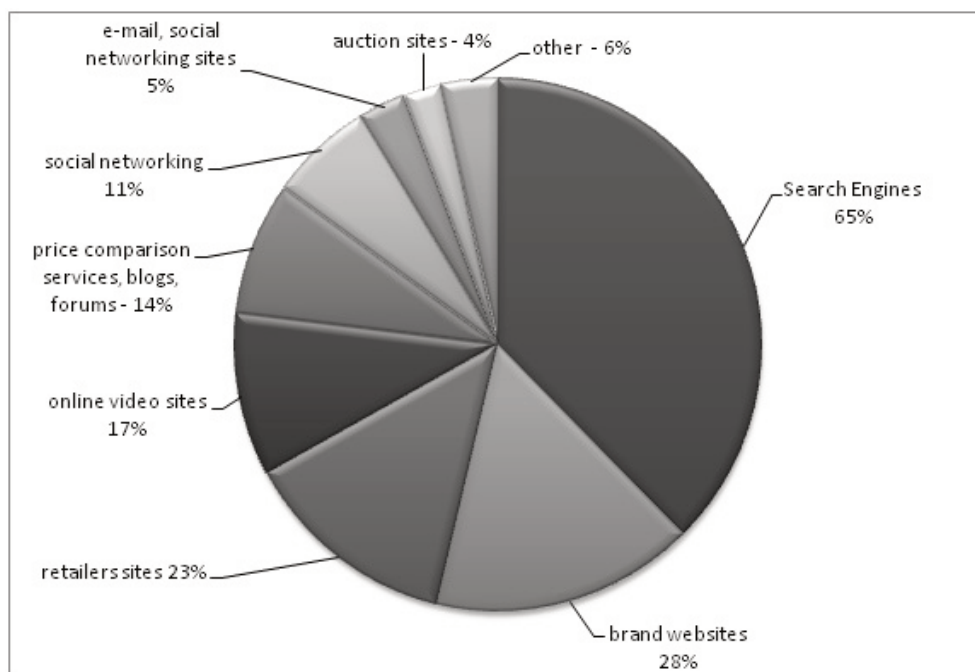
As we can see from the figure, the indicators for 2013-2017 years are predominantly increasing in the countries being compared, including in Ukraine, that indicates an increase in the popularity of the Internet itself, and hence the expansion of opportunities associated with the promotion of goods and services, trademarks and brands through the Internet. Of course, in comparison with countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic, Ukraine is lagging behind in percentage terms, but the popularization of the Internet is moving dynamically with annual growth. It should be noted that the backlog in 2017 in the figure can be explained by the fact that the data were published as of July 2017, and therefore did not take into account the growth in recent months of the year (and, judging by the dynamics of recent years, it is possible to predict its growth also).

At the same time, in the process of choosing goods, services or searching for the necessary information about a brand or a trademark, Ukrainians use quite a lot of information Internet sources (Figure 4).

As we can see from the figure, potential for the development of Internet branding is extremely high and dynamically increases due to the growing popularity of social networks and video sites.

In the context of this trend, we can identify the main reasons that have contributed to promotion of the Internet in the area of trade in goods and services. Such reasons include: convenience for a buyer – there are no queues, a purchase can be done at any convenient time, round the clock service without weekends and holidays; a great choice – the number of items available in the catalog of an online store often exceeds that available at a regular retail outlet, especially if a buyer lives in a small city; anonymity – relevant for goods of certain categories related to satisfaction of special needs or goods of intimate nature; price comparison – quick access to information on the price offer of similar goods at various online stores; informative – the amount of information that can be collected about a product or service, including reviews and expert assessments, will be greater than when communicating with a sales consultant in offline mode (it should not be forgotten that most online stores also have consulting services in parallel on the network or by phone); bonus programs – customers of such stores, subscribing to a newsletter, regularly receive notifications about promotions and discounts; price – prices for goods are lower because there is no cost

<sup>1</sup> Дослідження поведінки онлайн користувачів. *Consumer Barometer with Google*. <<https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending>>.



**Figure 4. Distribution of Internet sources for information search by potential consumers. Designed by the author on the basis of research<sup>1</sup>.**

of renting a room, utilities, etc.; branded products – online order solves the problem of small towns, where it is often difficult to find specialized and highly specialized stores with branded goods; payment and delivery – payment with a bank card or electronic money is convenient, and online stores usually offer door-to-door delivery.

The process of building a brand on the Internet can be divided into two stages. At the first, measures are taken to build awareness of an audience about a brand; at the second, measures are implemented to strengthen the brand's position (Table 2).

Table 2

#### The stages of brand building on the Internet

The process of building a brand			
I stage		II stage	
Informatization and popularization of a brand		Effective promotion and positioning of a brand	
Objectives	to choose a niche (a segment) for a brand and its positioning in this niche;	Objectives	to strengthen brand's position with respect to its main competitors;
	to achieve brand awareness;		to increase brand loyalty, the formation of brand advocates (Internet users who agreed with the statement "If I have a brand I love, I usually tell everyone about it").
	to identify the needs of a target audience;		to enhance engagement with a target audience;
	to define the main essence of a brand;		to expand brand capabilities on the network;
	to form a loyal attitude towards a brand.		to research brand effectiveness and implement measures aimed at its improvement.

<sup>1</sup> Дослідження поведінки онлайн користувачів. *Consumer Barometer with Google*. <<https://www.consumerbarometer.com/en/trending>>.

At the same time, transfer of a brand to the Internet requires from companies to adjust their strategies. There are several reasons for this: there are virtual communities in addition to individual consumers in the network; people expect companies to be more inclined to listen than to talk; community, in contrast to more passive offline consumers, are directly involved in the brand development.

It is believed that most Ukrainian brands are much weaker represented online than offline. However, there are companies whose target audience is widely represented on the Internet (this is primarily a service, consulting, computer technology, advertising and publishing agencies, electronic stores, various funds, Internet media, etc.). Internet branding is actively used in business, which is largely dependent on individual contact with a consumer, retail sales of goods or services or from work with large orders<sup>1</sup>.

For the formation, promotion and positioning of a brand in the network the following marketing tools are used:

1. Web tools: a site, its design, snippets (text snippets taken from a site are necessary to optimize the search process in search engines), favicon (miniature icons that accompany the text and add to it a high degree of individuality and memorization), landing pages (pages of a site that a user goes from the search engine, it should be relevant to an inquiry), prescribing the site in the Internet directories (providing a "1-20" place in search engines).

2. Advertising tools: domain name, banner, logo, music, videos, photos and infographics, viral videos, sponsorship.

3. Information support: blogs, forums, social networks, thematic articles, analytics, press releases, news, recommendations.

4. Feedback: feedback forms, questions and answers service.

5. Entertaining: contests on thematic resources, flash games, etc.

If to analyze branding strategies on the Internet, they can be long-term and short-term in duration. In the modern Internet space, short-term campaigns predominate, lasting no more than 6-12 weeks. For these strategies is optimal, the combination of the Internet within the framework of a general advertising campaign, in parallel with the involvement of other channels of information: print sources, television, radio and outdoor advertising. For such events, a marketing mix, a single slogan and single images are used<sup>2</sup>.

Short-term strategies are best suited for promoting small and medium-sized businesses. The most effective tools for implementing short-term strategies for Internet branding are promotional sites, banner ads, online contests, giveaways, and actions on their own site and within the content of other resources, with an appropriate target audience. Such strategies are appropriate to implement in cases where a set of measures is carried out to reposition a brand or in the framework of crisis response<sup>3</sup>.

In other cases, long-term strategies of Internet branding are better. At the same time, it is more effective to use PR and direct marketing, while reducing the percentage of advertising<sup>4</sup>. The main functions of long-term Internet branding and the result, on which efforts should be aimed are: to ensure close and effective contact with Internet and traditional press for use in crisis situations; to increase consumer's commitment to a brand through its inclusion in the process of developing an interesting Internet project; to increase the level of consumer awareness with all components of a product promoted by a brand; to strengthen consumer's confidence in brand quality; to organize interactive communication; to create and stabilize the company's brand through joint actions with well-known Internet communities and opinion leaders.

Control over effectiveness of promotion activities – using a site as the main tool of promotion, the effectiveness of indicators may be tracked by the number of pages viewed (at a specified time); pageview depth (number of pages viewed); time spent by a user on a site; repeated visit and purchase; direct visits (via address bar, or bookmarks); transition addresses (for monitoring banner ads).

**Conclusions.** Consequently, according to our research, it can be determined that Internet branding in the conditions of permanent and dynamic development of a market environment is a complex process that can be considered more effective than traditional, since in a real space it is limited by physical

<sup>1</sup> Шабанов, Т.И. (2012). Развитие инструментов Интернет-брендинга в России. *Бизнес в законе*, 1, 333.

<sup>2</sup> Серов, В. (2011). *Два типа Интернет стратегий*. <<http://www.mdmarketing.ru/articles/html/article32137.html>>.

<sup>3</sup> Келлер, К.Л. (2005). *Стратегический бренд-менеджмент: создание, оценка и руководство марочным капиталом*. Москва: Издательство «Вильямс», 159-171.

<sup>4</sup> Серов, В. (2011). *Два типа Интернет стратегий*. <<http://www.mdmarketing.ru/articles/html/article32137.html>>.



parameters, time and geographical boundaries, and in the virtual – these factors should not be taken into account, focusing only on ways of communication with a target audience.

Since for the vast majority of consumers, the Internet has become a usual tool for searching and analyzing information on market offerings, it is possible to predict that new brands will immediately migrate to the online space since such technologies will significantly reduce the cost of “exit” to the market. Implementation of the potential of online branding in combination with traditional marketing tools will provide additional opportunities for the formation of effective promotion strategies, both for brands of successful companies and for innovative small and medium enterprises.

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