

BETWEEN INFORMATION AND PERSUASION

LANGUAGE AS A MARKETING TOOL

Language is the most important and, at the same time, the most poorly defined tool of marketing communication. In an era of message overproduction, linguistic clichés, and growing content automation, it is really easy to get lost between meaning and convention. Marketing language increasingly utilises a recognisable form rather than precise communication. This raises questions about responsibility for one's words, the limits of persuasion, and whether marketing language is still capable of communicating.



Photo: Freepik

LANGUAGE BETWEEN INFORMATION AND PERSUASION

One of the key problems in marketing communication remains the question of the function of language. Is its primary role to inform, build image, establish relationships, or persuade? According to Angelika M. Pabian, PhD, a researcher at the Institute of Sociology of the University of Silesia in Katowice, specialising in, among other things, marketing management and marketing communication, language should be understood primarily as a tool of communication that naturally combines informational, educational, persuasive, and competitive functions. These roles are not mutually exclusive, but rather intertwined and dependent on the sender's intentions and the purpose of the message. The researcher points out that these days drawing the line between educating the recipient and attempting to persuade them to behave in a certain way is particularly problematic. In marketing practice, communication is very rarely neutral. Even seemingly informative messages contain elements of persuasion that are difficult to classify as either ethical or unethical. This blurring of boundaries means that the language of marketing requires constant reflection and critical consideration.

RECIPIENTS AND THEIR LANGUAGE SKILLS

The issue of the recipient is inextricably linked to language. To what extent does contemporary marketing communication really take into account the linguistic and cultural competencies of its recipients, and to what extent does it use the simplified concept of a target group?

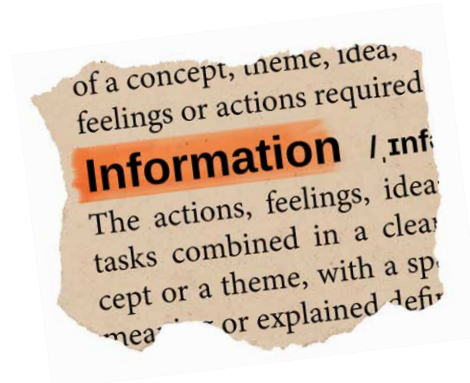
'Although the target market (customers) still determines the forms and styles of communication, we are increasingly encountering tension between personalisation and language unification', says the expert, emphasising that every brand should have its own consistent communication style resulting from its mission, vision, and identity.

At the same time, the development of internet communication has brought about new linguistic phenomena, such as cyber semantics, slang, and newspeak. Although linguistic correctness is still important, in practice it often gives way to speed and effectiveness of communication. Personalisation and unification now function in parallel. Both trends can either improve or reduce the quality of communication.

MEDIUM SHAPES LANGUAGE

Another important issue is the relationship between language and the channel of communication. Social media enforce brevity, emotionality, and visuality of communication.

'We live in a world of constant rush, where time has become a scarce resource. Therefore, recipients expect messages that are short, intense, and immediately engaging', notes Angelika Pabian. This raises the question of the consequences of this change. Does the dominance of imagery and icons over words lead to an impoverishment of communication? Does it weaken the ability



to reflect and deeply understand content?

'Online communication often takes place at the expense of direct communication, which affects not only the language of marketing, but social relations as such', adds the researcher.

LINKEDINISATION OF LANGUAGE


A particular problem in contemporary marketing is the phenomenon known as LinkedIn newspeak. The repetition of concepts such as innovation, quality, excellence, and experience (often used almost as if they were straight-up copy-pasted) leads to their semantic impoverishment.

'The mechanical reproduction of proven communication patterns deprives language of its ability to differentiate between offers and build credibility. The market requires differentiation, which means getting rid of blandness and cookie-cutter approaches. From this perspective, copying established patterns is the worst possible solution. The key is to construct your own communication identity and constantly strive for linguistic correctness', emphasises the sociologist.

LANGUAGE IN THE AGE OF AUTOMATION

Automation and mass content generation using artificial intelligence give rise to new concerns about the future of language in marketing communication. Angelika Pabian notes that AI is now capable of creating correct and effective messages, but their nature still depends on humans – on their intentions, linguistic sensitivity, and cultural context.

Therefore, language remains not only a sales tool but also a space for responsibility, interpretation, and meaning. The quality of reflection on words determines whether marketing communication will build relationships based on trust or merely reproduce empty patterns in an increasingly loud information noise.

 Adam Bała

 Angelika M. Pabian, PhD
Institute of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Silesia in Katowice
angelika.pabian@us.edu.pl