

## CUSTOMER ORIENTATION IN THE CENTRE OF MARKETING THOUGHT

*“Sustained growth depends on how broadly you define your business – and how carefully you gauge your customers’ needs.”*

Theodore Levitt

This thought that Levitt wrote in the now legendary paper on marketing myopia, published in 1960 in the *Harvard Business Review*, is still very topical today, and – similarly to overcoming marketing myopia which is reflected in the lack of orientation on meeting customers’ needs – remains the key element of marketing theory. This thought should be the underlying mantra of marketing in any company, including Slovenian ones. Even though almost 60 years have passed since Levitt’s insight into the significance of marketing and marketing orientation, it seems as if many companies still quickly get caught in the loop of product orientation, where the product and its quality are superior, marketing the necessary consequence of the product and thus reduced to sales support through marketing communication, while care for the customer for whom the product is intended is pushed to the background.

The papers of this issue of *Akademija MM* attest, each in its own way, to the fact that it is necessary to cut this Gordian knot once and for all, as they put consumers and their needs to the forefront of their research and thinking.

## UVODNIK

## EDITORIAL

## PORABNIŠKA USMERJENOST V SREDIŠČU MARKETINŠKE MISLI

*»Trajnostna rast je odvisna od širine tvojega poslovanja – in od tega, kako pazljivo določiš potrebe svojih porabnikov.«*

Theodore Levitt

Misel, ki jo je Levitt zapisal v danes že kar legendarnem prispevku o marketinški kratkovidnosti, ki je bil leta 1960 objavljen v *Harvard Business Review*, je še danes nadvse aktualna in – tako kot preseganje marketinške kratkovidnosti, ki se kaže zlasti v pomanjkljivi osredotočenosti na porabnika – ostaja ključni element marketinške teorije. Za obstoj marketinga v podjetjih, tudi slovenskih, je ta misel tista, ki bi si jo vsako podjetje kot mantra moralo vedno znova ponavljati. Čeprav je od Levittovih levitov o pomenu marketinga in marketinške usmerjenosti minilo že skoraj šestdeset let, je videti, kot da se številna podjetja še vedno kaj hitro ujamejo v zanko produktne usmerjenosti, znotraj katere sta izdelek in njegova kakovost superiorna, marketing le nujna posledica izdelka in zato zreduciran na podporo prodaji skozi tržno komuniciranje, skrb za porabnika, ki mu je izdelek pravzaprav namenjen, pa potisnjena v ozadje.

Da je treba ta gordijski vozec enkrat za vselej presekat, nam, vsak na svoj način, pripovedujejo tudi prispevki tokratne številke *Akademije MM*, ki vsi po vrsti v središče svojega raziskovanja

The paper by Teja Šulin Podkrajšek and Klement Podnar *Environmental Consciousness, Scepticism, and Willingness to Pay More for Green-labelled Products: Exploratory Analysis* addresses the sustainable and ecological aspects of consumer needs. In a study conducted among Slovenian consumers, the authors focus on how environmental consciousness and scepticism towards green labels influence consumers' willingness to pay more for green-labelled products. Results indicate that environmental consciousness has a positive influence on the willingness to pay more for green products, which provides a valuable signal for manufacturers and retailers, revealing a growing ecological orientation of Slovenian consumers.

In her paper entitled *Brand Anthropomorphism: Examining the Reliability and Validity of Two Selected Ways of Its Measuring*, Urška Tuškej Lovšin addresses the concept of brand anthropomorphism revealing that consumers can perceive specific brands as human-like entities. Along with proposals how to measure anthropomorphism, the results of her study, on a sample of Slovenian consumers, confirm the positive influence of brand anthropomorphism on consumers' emotional commitment and thus accentuate its role in establishing consumer-brand relationships.

Petar Gidaković and Barbara Čater also touch upon consumer relationships in the review article *Complaint Management and its Importance for Company Performance*. They find that consumer complaints, despite the high frequency of this phenomenon in commercial practice in Slovenia, are a relatively poorly studied area, while considerable consumer dissatisfaction with the handling of complaints has been identified. By defining the key concepts in this field and based on a review of the relevant literature, the paper aims to help company representatives to better understand the complaint management and its importance for company performance.

Improved user experience in the service process can greatly contribute to a greater orientation towards the needs of users today and as a consequence better company performance. In their study entitled *Gamification in Service Marketing: Introducing Game Elements in the Process of Airplane Tickets Purchase*, Nina Černič and Urša Golob focus on the question of the importance of game elements in marketing practice. The results of their exploratory study conducted as a quasi-experiment show that the elements that increase emotional involvement and physical presence have a statistically significant positive impact on the user experience.

in razmišljanja postavljajo porabnika in njegove potrebe.

Prispevek Teje Šulin Podkrajšek in Klementa Podnarja z naslovom *Okoljska ozaveščenost, skepticizem do zelenih oznak in pripravljenost plačati več za zelene izdelke: Eksplorativna analiza* obravnava trajnostni in ekološki vidik potreb porabnikov. Avtorja se v raziskavi med slovenskimi porabniki osredotočata na povezanost med okoljsko ozaveščenostjo, skeptičnostjo do zelenih oznak in pripravljenostjo plačati več za izdelke z zelenimi oznakami. Rezultati njune študije kažejo, da ima okoljska ozaveščenost pozitiven vpliv na pripravljenost plačati več za zelene izdelke, kar je pomemben signal za proizvajalce in trgovce in kaže na vedno večjo ekološko usmerjenost slovenskih porabnikov.

Urška Tuškej Lovšin se v prispevku z naslovom *Antropomorfizacija znamk: preverjanje zanesljivosti in veljavnosti dveh izbranih načinov merjenja* ukvarja s konceptom antropomorfizacije znamk, ki razkriva, da porabniki lahko znamko zaznavajo tudi kot človeško entiteto. Poleg predlogov, kako antropomorfizacijo izmeriti, rezultati njene študije na vzorcu slovenskih porabnikov potrjujejo tudi pozitiven vpliv antropomorfizacije znamk na čustveno zavezanost porabnika in prispevajo k utemeljitvi vloge, ki jo ima antropomorfizacija znamk pri vzpostavljanju odnosov med potrošniki in znamkami.

Vprašanja odnosov s porabniki se dotikata tudi Petar Gidaković in Barbara Čater v preglednem prispevku *Management pritožb porabnikov in njegovem pomen za poslovanje podjetja*. Ugotavljata, da pritožbe porabnikov kljub pogostosti tega pojava v poslovni praksi predstavljajo v slovenskem prostoru relativno slabo raziskano področje, hrkrati pa se v praksi pojavlja veliko nezadovoljstvo z reševanjem pritožb, čedalje več pa je tudi spletnih pritožb. Prispevek želi zato z opredelitvijo ključnih pojmov s tega področja in s pregledom relevantne literature pomagati predstavnikom podjetij bolje razumeti management pritožb ter njegov pomen za uspešno poslovanje.

K večji usmerjenosti k potrebam novodobnih porabnikov in posledično k uspešnejšemu poslovanju podjetja lahko veliko prispeva tudi izboljšana uporabniška izkušnja storitve. Nina Černič in Urša Golob se zato v svoji študiji z naslovom *Igrifikacija v storitvenem marketingu: uvajanje elementov iger v proces spletnega nakupa letalskih kart* osredotočata na vprašanje pomena elementov iger v marketinški praksi. Rezultati njune eksplorativne študije v obliki kvazieksperimenta kažejo, da zlasti elementi, ki povečujejo čustveno

The final paper of this issue also focuses on consumers' digital reality. In their paper *The Influence of Slovenian Beauty Blogs on Purchase Intentions of Younger Millennials*, Neža Hrovat and Nataša Verk study the role of bloggers, i.e. influencers, who share their opinions or recommendations regarding specific products, brands, or companies. In their empirical study they examine the model of studying the influences of blogs on consumers' purchase intentions. The results show that the blog content produced by Slovenian beauty bloggers affects the purchase intention of the generation of (younger) millennials. The paper also examines some practical implications of research results for bloggers and companies that collaborate with them to pursue marketing goals.

When Levitt wrote about marketing myopia, the digital world, and the slow prevalence of services rather than products he probably had no premonitions about the future. Nevertheless, both is becoming the reality in today's marketing theory and practice. Even though reality changed considerably, the consumer, as seen by Levitt, did not change that much. Consumers still (or even more so) require that marketing professionals truly understand them and concentrate on them. To be able to that that, and thus ensure business success, we should always have in mind their reality and problems, which are, as attested by these papers, clearly demonstrated by empirical findings of researchers. Finally, let me invite you to read this issue and reflect on the necessity of consumer orientation by yet another Levitt's aphorism: "If thinking is an intellectual response to a problem, then the absence of a problem leads to the absence of thinking."

I want to thank all authors and reviewers for their efforts in creating this 27th issue of *Akademija MM*.

#### REFERENCE

Levitt, T. (2004 [1960]). Marketing myopia. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(7/8), 138–149.

Assoc. Prof. Dr **Urša Golob**,  
Editor of the 27th Issue of *Akademija MM*

vključenost in fizično prisotnost, pozitivno vpliva jo na uporabniško izkušnjo.

Na digitalno realnost porabnikov se osredotoča tudi zadnji prispevek tokratne številke. Avtorici Neža Hrovat in Nataša Verk pod naslovom *Vpliv slovenskih lepotnih blogov na nakupno namero generacije mlajših milenijcev* raziskujeta vlogo blogerjev – vplivnežev, ki delijo mnenja ali priporočila o uporabi specifičnih izdelkov, tržnih znamk ali podjetij. V empirični študiji predstavlja ta model raziskovanja vpliva blogov na nakupno namero. Izsledki raziskave pokažejo, da vsebine, ki jih slovenski lepotni blogerji podajajo na svojih blogih, vplivajo na nakupno namero generacije (mlajših) milenijcev. Prispevek rezultate reflektira v luči implikacij za ustvarjalce blogov kot za podjetja, ki z blogerji sodelujejo z namenom uresničevanja marketinških ciljev.

Ko je Levitt pisal o marketinški kratkovidnosti, o digitalnem svetu in počasni prevladi storitev nad izdelki verjetno ni slutil ničesar. Oboje postaja realnost dandanašnje marketinške teorije in prakse. Čeprav se je realnost torej precej spremenila, pa se porabnik, kot ga je videl Levitt, v svojem bistvu ni prav veliko. Še vedno (ali še bolj) zahteva, da ga kot marketinški strokovnjaki resnično razumemo in se mu posvetimo. Da to zmoremo in si s tem zagotovimo tudi poslovni uspeh, pa je dobro, da venomer mislimo na njegovo realnost in njegove probleme, ki se, kot pričajo opisani prispevki, nazorno pokažejo tudi skozi empirična dognanja raziskovalcev. Zato vas k premisleku o nujni porabniške usmerjenosti in k prebiranju tokratne številke vabim s še enim Levittovim aforizmom: »Če je razmišljanje intelektualni odgovor na problem, odsotnost problema vodi v odsotnost razmišljanja«.

Zahvaljujem se vsem avtorjem, avtoricam, recenzentom in recenzentkam za trud pri soustvarjanju 27. številke *Akademija MM*.

#### REFERENCA

Levitt, T. (2004 [1960]). Marketing myopia. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(7/8), 138–149.

izr. prof. dr. **Urša Golob**  
Urednica 27. številke *Akademije MM*