

# **SUMMARY OF THE PUBLICATIONS**

of main scientific works of Dr. Mihaela Mihaylova, participant in the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in scientific field 3.8 "Economics" (Marketing and Digital Business), announced for the needs of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (SG, issue 30/15.04.2022)

## **I. MONOGRAPHS**

- 1. Mihaylova, M. (2022). Realities and challenges that websites in Bulgaria are facing. Ed. of VUZF "St. Gregory the Theologian", Sofia, 2022, pages 126, ISBN 978-619-7622-26-3, (monographic work, submitted for the competition for "Assoc.Professor", according to the requirements of the Law for academic development in Bulgaria)**

### **Abstract:**

Market dynamism and globalization are the main trends and the driving mechanism for companies to apply new approaches and adopt new practices in their activities. To a large extent, due to the growing role of digitalization in the daily life of business and the individual, these new practices consist in the transformation of analog data into digital, the shift of physical processes to digital. And if in the last decade this has been happening at a predictable and planned pace, the global pandemic has accelerated this process to such an extent that many companies have failed to survive and have been thrown out of the market. In a pandemic, digitalization, along with its internal and external manifestations, has allowed existing habits of consumer-company relations to be maintained, but in an altered format. This monograph examines the external manifestations of digitalization on the Internet - in particular the websites of Bulgarian companies as part of the online presence and corporate identity, as well as a part of digital marketing. Based on the results

of parallel empirical research conducted among companies and users with Internet access, it is observed how digitalization as a trend has affected Bulgarian companies and their websites, what are the consumer preferences and perceptions when using websites and where are the intersections between what is realized by companies and what is preferred by consumers. The monograph is relevant due to the growing role of digitalization, the presence of the Internet in everyday life, as well as due to the objective need for companies to develop adaptive skills in the turbulent and dynamic competitive environment today.

## **II. BOOKS**

- 1. Mihaylova, M. (2021). Direct marketing and market orientation at the companies in Bulgaria, pages 187, Ed. of VUZF "St. Gregory the Theologian" Sofia, 2021, ISBN 978-619-7622-02-7– PDF. Book based on a dissertation for the award of the scientific degree "Doctor in Economics".**

Globalization, market dynamics, growing competition, and digitalization in all spheres of human life are among the main prerequisites that play a role as a driving force for the application of new approaches by companies in Bulgaria. This is the approach of direct marketing, which is characterized by maintaining an individual relationship with the consumer, guided by their characteristics, preferences, and profile. Increasingly attentive listening to the wishes and needs of consumers is due to their better information, higher demands, and their desire to get a personal attitude, different to other clients in the company. Direct marketing research is united in the view on the conceptual distinction of the following direct marketing approaches: personalized approach, building long-term relationships, and building customer loyalty. They are becoming more and more applicable when communicating on an individual level and when creating a sense of uniqueness in the user. The personalization approach is possible by adapting and analyzing the user information that the company has. The starting point of this approach is the consumer. The approach of building long-term relationships involves creating a relationship between the company and the consumer, which is maintained by both parties. As every company strives to create loyal customers, the approach to building customer loyalty is aimed specifically at those who generate or would generate profit.

Loyalty programs, including membership cards, discounts, exclusive products, etc., are a tangible expression of estimated customer loyalty. As a consequence, the application of direct marketing approaches is a prerequisite for increasing profits, retaining customers, and maintaining the company's competitive position on the market. At the same time, the development of the market orientation of the company is considered as a key condition for maintaining the competitive position. It is associated with building a sustainable competitive advantage based on constantly collected and analyzed information. This information concerns the external and internal environment of the company. Information about the external environment is collected from users, competitors, and all individuals with which the company has relations, and the internal - from the company itself, which affects the resources at its disposal, like coordination between departments, the capabilities that can be used to achieve optimal results, etc. Market orientation is a philosophy that, when applied in practice, covers the entire organization, regardless of its size. Its main goal is to provide consumers with higher value than the competitors. The need to develop and implement market orientation is associated with the need for product differentiation, which leads to providing additional value to the customer. This study is relevant due to the growing role of direct marketing in the daily life of the consumer and the growing number of companies implementing direct marketing.

The concept of direct marketing implies high satisfaction of consumer requirements. The possibility for maximum personalization of the company's offer relates to the fact that the needs of the addressee of the offer will be met to such a high degree. The consumer is in the center of market orientation and their needs and preferences are leading in collecting and analyzing information. But at the same time, companies applying the direct marketing approach are associated with their focus on sales and the pressure they put on the customer to buy, again pursuing sales at all costs. Market orientation and its proper application in Bulgaria raises a number of questions:

- Are the Bulgarian companies that are applying direct marketing aware of the need for market orientation?
- Are these Bulgarian companies able to apply the concept of market orientation in their activities?
- How is market orientation perceived - as a proactive action or as a reactive one?
- How does market orientation affect consumers and are their needs monitored and analyzed - is feedback seen as a guide and a means for corrective actions?

- Are the approaches of direct marketing in line with the concept of market orientation?

### **III. SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES**

- 1. Mihaylova M. Direct marketing in Bulgaria – application and manifestation. Collection from International scientific conference "Management and engineering", ISCME'20, 2020, ISSN 1314-6327, 2020, pp. 224 – 234**

**Abstract:**

This paper represents the level of direct marketing application in Bulgaria. The results are extracted from empirical research conducted in 2018. The manifestation of direct marketing activities and the consequences that they provoke are also subject of discussion in the current paper. Recommendations based on the current direct marketing situation are being proposed.

**Keywords:** direct marketing, application, manifestation, companies in Bulgaria.

- 2. Mihaylova, M., Outlining direct marketing features of companies applying this approach when measuring their market orientation. Collection containing scientific works, 44, pp. 107-110, 2020, ISSN 2306-546X; eISSN 2414-3774, doi.org/10.31470/2306-546X-2020-44**

**Abstract:**

This article represents one of the stages of a study taken in Bulgaria in 2018 aiming to evaluate the level of market orientation of companies applying direct marketing approach related to the interaction between the customer and the company, and aimed to collection, processing, presence, maintaining and storage of actual information. The respondents are companies operating on the Bulgarian market which actively apply direct marketing approach. The process of differentiating

the companies passes through two consecutive and interrelated phases. The first phase aims to outline the direct marketing activities by checking if several of them are present and applied by the company. The second phase consists of analyzing the specifics of each activity. The set of questions to the respondents within the both phases is substantiated in the study according to the direct marketing approach. Conclusions according to the article. In Bulgarian companies the direct marketing and its application is guided by the principles of maintaining the information actual for customers; monitoring, recording and analyzing the customer's response; developing different proposals for different clients based on their value for the company. Key words: direct marketing, market orientation, customers, product, interactive process, communication, long-terms relations

**3. Mihaylova M. Online learning from the perspective of the marketing product and its levels. An empirical example from Bulgaria 2021, Journal „Economic thought“ Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, LXVI, 2021/2, ISSN 0013-2993, pp. 105-113,**

**Abstract:**

The pandemic, which began in 2020, has affected all areas of human activity. Education was also one of them, and its rapid adaptation to the new reality was a condition for guaranteeing the level of its quality. In order to comply with the recommendations for action during a pandemic, the educational process was moved entirely online. This process took place literally over the span of a single day, wherein the physical classrooms became virtual, and the teachers and students were faced with the challenge of changing their previous approaches in order to respond and deal with the situation. In this regard, for the purposes of the present paper, the understanding of online learning in higher education is reduced to the level of a marketing product, as a part of the marketing mix. The different levels of the product in the context of online learning are examined, as well as the factors that lead to the success of the products. The advantages, disadvantages and opportunities for improving online learning in higher education are studied based on own empirical research conducted among 230 students at different universities.

**Keywords: online learning; pandemic; universities; higher education; COVID-19.**

- 4. Mihaylova M. Foreign trade in a pandemic - challenges to after-sales service in B2B. Collection of papers, presented “Foreign trade and pandemic”, organized by VUZF and VUZF Lab, 2020, ISBN 978-619-7622-09-6, crp. 96-103**

**Abstract:**

The current paper presents the challenges that a Bulgarian B2B company encounters while obtaining after-sales service in a pandemic context. The effects generated by the pandemic and the characteristics of after-sales service are being commented. The situation of the current company is being analyzed as well as the actions taken in order to overcome the negative consequences. Key words: after-sales service, foreign trade, pandemic.

- 5. Mihaylova M., Online identity in a pandemic - from innovation practice to competitive advantage through the learning process. Sixth International Scientific-Business Conference – LIMEN. 2020 ISSN 2683-6149, ISBN 978-86-80194-39-4, p.91-100**

**Abstract:**

The current chapter presents the transformation of perception about the online identity of a business in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Online identity and related marketing activities, perceived until only recently as innovative actions, today are a prerequisite for a competitive advantage. The chapter comments on the general knowledge and understanding of this topic, the different types of innovations, the elements of online identity and the marketing actions related to them. The competitive advantage and the evolved view of its nature are outlined as a positive transformation – a creation of new knowledge as a result of the learning processes application.

**Keywords: Online identity, Competitive advantage, Innovation, Learning, Pandemic.**

- 6. Mihaylova M., Innovation through the prism of companies using direct marketing. An empirical example from Bulgaria. 2021. VUZF Review Journal, 6 (2), p. 11-15, ISSN 2534-9228**

**Abstract:**

The current article presents empirical results on the frequency and type of innovations applied by companies in Bulgaria that are using direct marketing. The research is provoked by the dynamic and changing nature of direct marketing. As one of the main characteristics of direct marketing is the absence of intermediaries, the companies should constantly develop their knowledge and competences so they can improve their contact and communication with their customers in order to apply correctly and profitably the three approaches associated with direct marketing. They are: the personalization in dealing with customers, the establishment of long-term relationships and the generation of customer's loyalty, and they happen through different media. An appropriate application of these approaches requires collection, record and analysis of information which is being more and more executed as an automated process. The different and new types of media, in turn, require methods and understanding that further develop or eliminate existing practices, beliefs, and technologies. In this context, a theoretical analysis of innovations is being first conducted. After having a structured division of innovations by their types a brief questionnaire is being developed. As a result, the report summarizes the intersections of the theory with the established practice in 97 companies in Bulgaria.

**Keywords: Direct Marketing, Innovation, Bulgaria.**

- 7. Mihaylova M. Direct marketing approaches in Internet. Challenges for personalisation, loyalty programs and long-term relationships. Academic journal management and education ISSN: 13126121, 2021, Vol. 17, p. 18-22**

**Abstract:**

Direct marketing aims to attract consumers at first place, but its main purpose is to be familiar with them. Collection, processing and analysis of information serve as a basis of direct marketing

approaches - personalization, loyalty and establishing of long-term relationship. In addition - direct marketing is flexible and adaptable thus it could be associated with every media and its successful application depends on taking into consideration the characteristics of every one of them. The current paper offers a different and non-traditional view of the challenges that personalization, loyalty and long-term relationship approaches face in the one of the most actual media – Internet. After confirming their advantages, it presents and comments the challenges that companies face when applying them. Logically the digitalization of informational resources should lead only to positive consequences for a personalized communication and for the development of the long-term and loyal relationships with consumers. The conclusion provided by the analysis of conducted surveys - show that even though digitalization contributes to their processes and strategies improvement, companies should not forget that they are interacting with real people that do not take the digitalization and the automatic data processing as an entirely positive process. The concept – „the more... the more“ is being rejected. In other words, this means that the more loyalty programs, or the more personalized communication and long-term customers do not generate more profit. Companies should find the balance when selecting and applying the appropriate „quantity“ of information that they possess with - to the right customers whose characteristics, behavior and intentions they have knowledge of.

**Keywords: Personalization, Loyalty, Long-term relationships, Direct Marketing, Challenges**

- 8. Mihaylova M., Internet or the most applicable media for direct marketing nowadays. Academic journal management and education. 2021. ISSN: 13126121, Vol. 17, p. 14-18**

**Abstract:**

Direct marketing is an approach associated with direct customer reach by the company without any intermediary present. It is based on direct communication and it aims to provoke a reaction from the customer. The current paper studies direct marketing within the context of the media used for its application. It traces the path of direct marketing as an activity and approach toward potential consumers, starting its implementation through post mail, then transitioning to telephone, television, and radio, in order to explain the success of the Internet as the most appropriate media



for direct marketing nowadays. The explanation for this could be found in the confirmation of the high level of overlapping between direct marketing characteristics and Internet features, and in addition to the several substantial disadvantages of traditional media. In relation to this, the paper presents the different ways in which direct marketing is being understood and the evolution of its definition depending on the media of its implementation. As a result, it offers a new definition of direct marketing, particularly in the online realms of the Internet. Alongside the numerous positive consequences generated by the selection of the Internet as a media, actions like digitalization and digitization are presented as crucial prerequisites for the proper functioning in an online environment. In order to confirm and broaden the relevance and substance of the current paper, a brief comment on direct marketing in the context of the pandemic is being proposed based on the surprising significance of direct marketing concepts developed 40 years ago and their applicability with relation to the ones used today.

**Key words: Direct Marketing, Internet, Digitalization**

**9. Mihaylova M., Market orientation as a base of the employer branding. 2nd International Baku conference on scientific research, April 28-30, 2021, Baku Odlar Yurdu University, Azerbaijan, 2021. ISBN: 978-605-70554-7-7, p. 445-448**

**Abstract:**

A brand could represent a product, service or even a concept. In general, the brand has a distinguishing function in relation to competitor's products, services and concepts. Although branding is often being associated with company's goods, it could be examined from the employer branding perspective – a process related to the company's efforts to establish a positive reputation as an employer towards its future and present employees. Different interpretations of market orientation overlap regarding the need to gather and analyze information in striving to deliver a greater value in various domains as: customer and employee satisfaction, competitive advantages and company reputation. This information applies to internal sources – the processes inside the company and employees' actions, and to external ones as competitors, stakeholders and others. The current article examines the relation between employer branding and market orientation. In

details, it discusses the market orientation as a base of the employer branding as a process developing organizational culture and values.

**Keywords: market orientation, employer branding**

**10. Mihaylova M., Market orientation effects. Collection scientific papers from XIX International scientific conference „Management and engineering’ 21. 2021. ISSN: 1314-6327, pp. 194-199**

**Abstract:** Market orientation is a process and an integrated conceptual frame that is based on the good market knowledge as well as on the reaction as a result of this knowledge absorption. It is established on the regular flow, understanding and application of information concerning a company’s internal and external environments. Market orientation is put in practice through the coordination between the departments, the application of the marketing concept and the strive for delivering greater value to the customer compared to the one offered by competitors. Market orientation application leads to effects such as: developing organizational learning and competitive advantage, improving company results, and innovative thinking. The current paper studies different aspects of the manifestation of these effects by analyzing the empirical studies within different industries in this area.

**Keywords - market orientation, effects, organizational learning, competitive advantage, firm’s performance, innovation.**

**11. Mihaylova M. Direct marketing definitions. Evolution. Collection scientific papers from XIX International scientific conference „Management and engineering’ 21. 2021. ISSN: 1314-6327, стр. 190-193**

**Abstract:**

Over the last 30 years defining the concept of direct marketing has provoked a constant scientific interest. Scientists - unified around the idea of outlining its basic characteristics, “contouring” its

activities and defining the goals that the direct marketing aims to achieve – have supplemented, corrected or even rejected the existing definitions. We have even observed propositions for renaming the direct marketing to database marketing or relationship marketing. One of the reasons for the evolution of the definitions of direct marketing could be explained by its adaptability towards the ongoing technologies during the period when it has been implemented. Another explanation for the lack of one single definition lays in the objective difficulty for the direct marketing to be limited to one single domain or process taking into consideration its complexity, multilayered structure and dynamics. The current paper reviews most of the existing definitions for direct marketing and outlines their bases. In addition, it offers a new definition of direct marketing especially on the Internet.

**Keywords – direct marketing, definition, evolution, data driven marketing, interaction.**

**12. Mihaylova M. The website as a digital marketing tool. Economic and social alternatives Journal, 28 (1), 2022. ISSN (online): 2534-8965, pp. 142-151**

The increasing role of the Internet in all aspects of human life, digitalization, markets' dynamics, and the pandemic started in 2020 are some of the main prerequisites playing the role of a driving power for change, development and application of new practices and approaches within companies. The pandemic context modified customers' and business' habits and their manifestation. The capabilities of companies and customers were tested simultaneously in the context of their level of adaptability. The necessity for retaining existing practices and relations was objective, but their format required an update. This update was made feasible by the Internet where those companies which managed to develop their online presence and identity became the ones whose digitalization processes and activities contributed to a sustainable competitive advantage. The article discusses the website as one the most important and contemporary communication tools for existing and potential customers. Specifics, definitions and types of websites are presented as part of the online presence and digitalization as a process. Websites are examined as an unalterable part of companies' digital marketing as a whole and as part of their channels – Pay Per Click Marketing, Social Media Marketing, Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing.

**Key words: digitalization, digital marketing, website, digital channels, online presence**

**13. Mihaylova M. Interactivity and usability as website characteristics. Money and Culture Journal. 1,2022, pp. 43-56, ISSN 2683-0965**

**Abstract:**

Digitalization as a process is often characterized by sustainability, applicability and a growing, even comprehensively widespread, proliferation. Digitalization could be defined as an internal, as well as an external process of an organization. The internal type of digitalization is related to improved processes within the organization. When it comes to the external perspective, digitalization is often associated with the Internet and the opportunities that it offers – business representation, offering goods and services, establishing brand identity, etc. A company's digitalized online presence or Internet presence could be shown through their website. Interactivity and usability are sustainable characteristics of every website, regardless of its type. They play a crucial role in the overall impression of a website, as well as in the online results generated by the company. The current article presents the nature of a website and the different understandings of interactivity and usability in its context.

**Keywords: Website, Digitalization, Interactivity, Usability**