FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EMPRESA

UNIVERSIDAD POLITÉCNICA DE CARTAGENA

CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

HOW BRAND ENDORSEMENT AND MARKETING AFFECT CUSTOMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOR

CASE STUDY ON S.C. UNIVERSUL DALLESGO S.R.L.

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INTRODUCTION

The present paper represents an approach to customer relationship management seen as a management tool whose final aim is customers' satisfaction and retention. Moreover, it deals with brand endorsement techniques and with their effects on customers' buying behaviour and on the decision-making process in general.

Therefore, my paper analyses not only the managerial aspects of customer relationship dimension consisting of techniques and processes used by a company when performing its activities. It analyses also the psychological features taken into account by companies when designing and promoting their products.

In addition to this, there are to be presented the effects that public figures and celebrities endorsing the products of a certain company have in the process of selection performed by customers.

However, when speaking about brand endorsement, the satisfaction and retention of customers are not guaranteed. But its impact on human psychology cannot be denied. Celebrities endorsing a certain product can be the main differentiation element when choosing between two products.

I have chosen to approach this subject because in my opinion any company which delivers products or services must focus first on the clients it wants to attract and only after this on the product or service that it wants to promote and sell.

The customer is the first aspect that a company takes into account when starting a business. In other words, it must choose the customer segment it wants to focus on and only after this it can develop the products or services that best suit the needs of the targeted customers.

This calls for a great quantity and quality of information which can only be obtained through research. In the present days one of the most important tools a company can possess is "customer knowledge management" (Wilde 2011, p. 47) which comes as a customer relationship management strategy of deepening knowledge about customers.

The main purpose of integrating this strategy into CRM refers to strengthening the collaboration between the company and its customers by converting them into active partners.

Moreover, I have decided to apply these theoretical aspects on S.C. Universul DallesGo S.R.L., a small company headquartered in Bucharest because of the great flexibility of its operations, as well as diversity and collaboration with some of the best-known specialists in Romania.

This company was relevant for my research thanks to the partnerships they have with some of the most important fashion brands in Romania (Elle, M.A.C., Bourjois, Vogue, Zara, Mango). This brand endorsement effect can be described by the ambient characterising Spain in general also, as the country is considered one of the fashion world`s capitals.

The representative figures of celebrities like Antonio Banderas, Penelope Cruz, Gerard Piqué, Enrique Iglesias, Rafael Nadal, Eva González, Blanca Suárez and brands such as Zara, Mango, Massimo Dutti, Desigual and other worldwide known names convert the endorsement practice into a habitual marketing technique.

Therefore, I had a great opportunity to analyse the real impact brand endorsement has on customers buying behaviour. However, this effect cannot be taken for granted. From personal research, it was revealed that customers take into consideration also the quality of the offered services, not only the marketing efforts a company makes in order to attract customers.

To begin with, the introduction creates the background of the paper, the reason for choosing to deal with these subjects and the methodology used in the research phase of the project.

Further on, the first chapter deals with the theoretical aspects of customer relationship management which will be useful for understanding better their applicability in real life situation, respectively in the activities performed by Universul DallesGo.

Moreover, the second chapter is a background of the industry where the company operates, namely the personal development industry which will be focused on general characteristics of the industry and on the main trends and statistics.

The third and the forth chapters are focused on the case study and on the applicability of the theoretical elements presented in the first chapter. Therefore, the company description and the main financial indicators are to be presented, as well as various customer relationship management tools that the company implements in its activities.

Also, some graphical models will reveal the relationships between the amount of marketing investments and the turnover of the company. In this sense, it will be demonstrated that brand endorsement and strong advertising represent influential factors in the number of customers applying for DallesGo courses, thus for the turnover and the profits of the company.

Finally, a pool of conclusion will be shaped as result of the findings revealed by the research. Moreover, solutions and recommendations are to be proposed to the management based on the findings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for the present case study is based on secondary research such as historical data about past financial performance, financial indicators and non-financial data which will result in valuable analysis outcomes. This information is the result of the interviews conducted inside the company with the brand manager and with the employees of the company also.

Moreover, the project is based on primary research as well conducted through questionnaires regarding customers' perceptions on the industry and the concept of brand endorsement in Romania.

Finally, the collected data will be used for the presentation of various graphical models which will reveal the effect of brand endorsement on the customers' choices and thus on the profitability of the company as result of these choices influenced by the endorsement techniques applied by DallesGo company.

1. CHAPTER 1 – LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Customer Relationship Management (CRM)–the key of success in today's business

Nowadays flexibility and adaptability are the key aspects guiding the third millennium businesses. The information a company possesses allows it to foresee its clients' needs as well as the evolution of the local and international market and in addition to counteract with the competition on the market.

The first aspect that any company must take into consideration is that nothing is constant in today's world. People's tastes change from one day to another as shaped by culture and by the environment they live in. In addition, companies must adapt their products and services to these changes and not the other way around: adapting people to their offerings.

Gregory H. Watson sustains in his article the idea that the customer is the ultimate purpose of any business. He supports his beliefs on Peter Drucker's theories about what a business really represents. Therefore, he rejects, as well as Drucker, the classical theory stating that business has as a main purpose the making of a profit. This sustains once more Peter Drucker's belief that "there is only one valid definition of business purpose: to create a customer" (Watson 2002).

In addition, when speaking about customers, needs, wants and satisfaction come together. But even more than this, orientation is essential. It refers to the knowledge about customers with the purpose of choosing the most appropriate customers to be served further on. Depending on this, customers are divided in two categories according to Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p. 16):

- The profitable customers who create monetary value for the company and
- The unprofitable customers who "are more costly to serve than to lose" (Kotler, Armstrong 2012, p. 16). This is the reason why it is better for the company to fire these customers.

Following a different path, there is also a special category of customers namely what Drucker and Maciariello (1999, p. 75) called "noncustomers" and who are as important as the existing customers a company has. The interesting fact is that their number is higher than the one expressing the already acquired customers.

Therefore, a special attention must be given to this category also because it has a great potential of increasing the company's profitability if they are carefully selected.

The explanation for this consists in the fact that maybe not all the noncustomers of a company can be profitable to serve. Therefore, only the ones that can bring greater value than their cost to the company are those whose needs should be addressed.

As companies grow in size, they are confronted with even more responsibilities. The demand on the market is flexible and they must adapt to their customers' requirements because they are the ones that companies base their profitability on.

Stefan Stern (2011) points out in his article that customers are those who can save the company of the future. But they must be highly taken into consideration as the main item on the agenda by applying the right business model and the appropriate CRM strategies

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1.2. Importance for the company

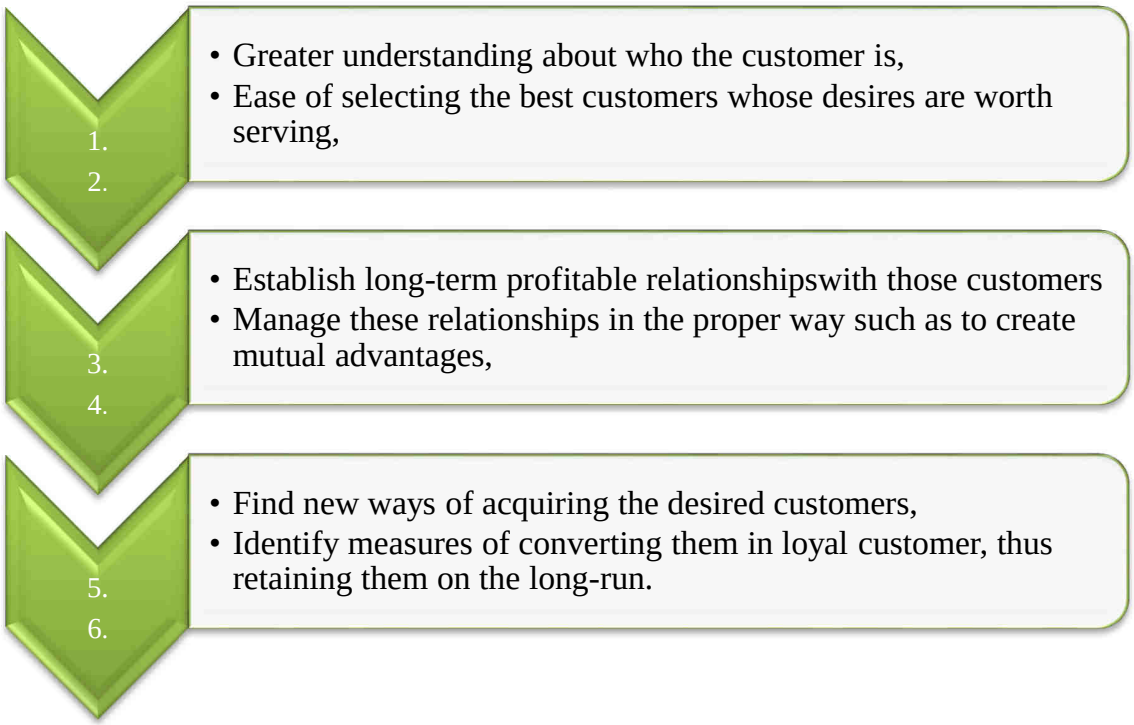


Figure 1.Importance of CRM
Source: own illustration

1.3. Short history of CRM

To begin with, CRM is the abbreviation for customer relationship management, seen as a management tool which upgrades the classical approach to customer orientation. In addition, the raise of CRM can be considered a transitional phase from the so called "transactional marketing" to "relationship marketing" (Prejmerean, 2009).

In other words, CRM made the transition from customer acquisition based-marketing to customer satisfaction and retention based-marketing. If before marketing was based on limited and rigorous functions, which were not allowed to interact inside the organization, after this transition the functions of marketing were given another shape and the flexibility to combine their characteristics with the purpose of reaching the general objectives of the organization.

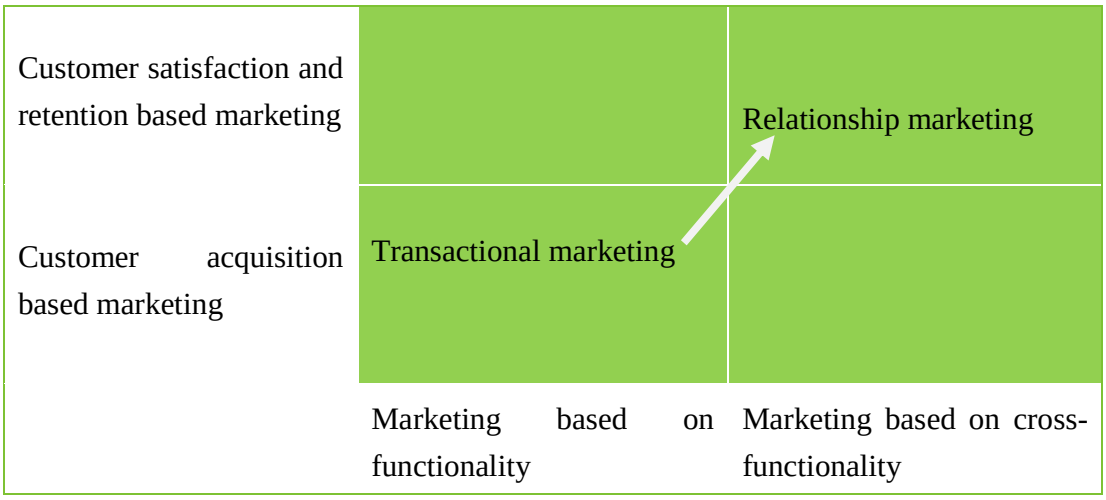


Figure 2.The transition to relationship marketing
Source: Own illustration adapted from Prejmerean, M C 2009

In addition, this new approach brought something new in the field of customer orientation:

-it has replaced the non-selective customer orientation which was focused more on customer acquisition, mass communication and market orientation with the selective customer orientation which is based more on customer retention, individual dialogue and customer orientation and customized marketing.
-it brought new solutions for companies to communicate with costumers and to strengthen their relationships as information and communication technology evolved in time.
-it has converted customer orientation into a central issue of the whole company therefore customer orientation has ceased to be a matter of the front office only.

Phases of evolution:

Customer relationship management (Prejmerean, 2009) provided a very useful insight in the history and evolution of CRM which can be enriched by Peelen (2005, p. 2) who was also concerned with the most important steps in the process of CRM implementation at a global level. Consequently, there are a couple of referential phases which made possible the successful evolution of CRM in time:

-the 50s were characterized by a lack of goods and services which determined a great focus on the process of production.
-the 60s were the years of progress directed towards investments in quality as a consequence of the need for technological development.
-the 70s were centred on the market orientation approach as consequence of companies producing goods and services which were easily sold thanks to a flexible and flawless demand of the market.
-the 80s brought a very strong evolution of the offer on the market which increased competition and determined the companies to focus more on competitive strategies and techniques to attract customers.
-the 90s represent the years of market saturation which determined the companies to position the customer in the centre of all their activities to satisfy his desires as much as possible.

Figure 3.Phases of evolution
Source: Own illustration

However, customer relationship management spread differently in the European countries. For some countries who were more interested in the economic aspect of this practice the implementation was faster. On the other hand, for other countries which were strongly tied to their old way of doing business the process was slower. However, after the emergence of customer relationship management, everyone realized that it was even more difficult to cope

with all its requirements in the absence of a complex set of data and information about the customer. The most relevant explanation of this fact is that companies were focused on acquiring as many customers as possible without taking into consideration retaining them also because this is a measure of quality that not all businesses are ready to invest in, even if it is more profitable on the long-run.

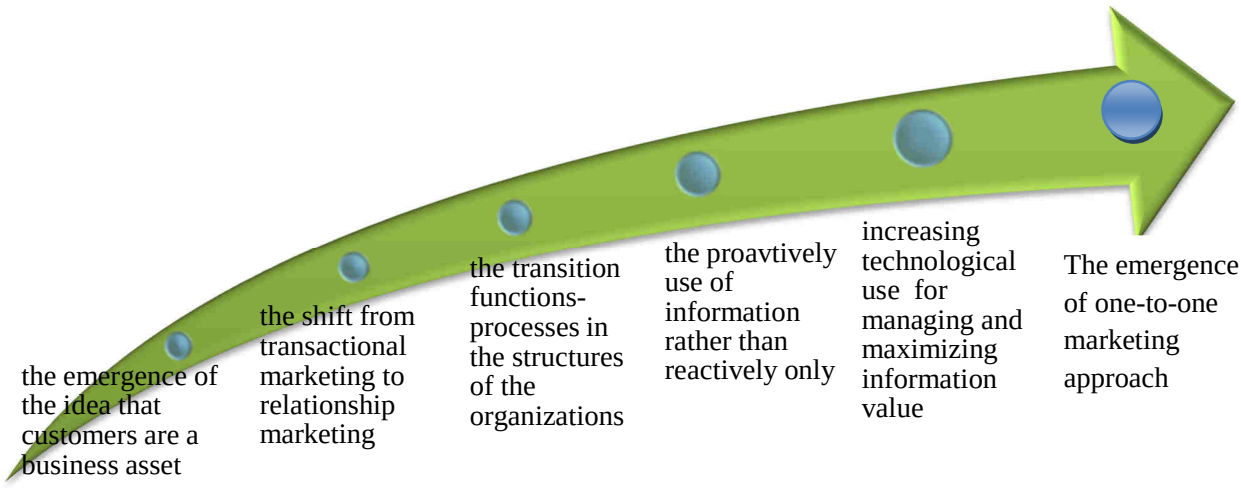


Figure 4.Evolution of CRM
Source: Own illustration

As consequence of this evolution, companies realized that their customers became a referential point situated in the middle of their activities. For this reason, nowadays customers are considered partners of the business, whose opinions cannot be ignored anymore in the decision-making process of any organization.

The evolution of communication technology is meant to make this partnership easier. Even so, at the beginning of 21st century CRM is still a hard target to be reached for many businesses. Technology is supposed to make it easier for the companies to identify its customers' needs to serve them individually. Peelen (2005, p.3) considers that the permanent communication with customers should function as a barrier against the competition which would determine customers to become loyal.

As consequence, customers would avoid switching with another company or product. Finally, this should be the certainty that a company will perform well financially. However, with all the implications of a CRM strategy, namely a certain culture, specific structure and procedures, this practice is new for many companies.

1.4. Defining CRM

***"Customer Relationship Management is the mechanism for retaining customers"* (Russell-Jones, 2003).**

Customer relationship management is reflected by "the principles, practices, and guidelines that an organization follows when interacting with its customers" (Investopedia Dictionary, Definition of Customer Relationship Management, para.1).

The basis of CRM is represented by the principles of relationship marketing and on the assumption that customers are not just a commercial audience but a business asset. CRM is the strategy that implements the collaboration between departments, the proactively use of information and the one-to-one marketing approach (Payne, 2006).

From a narrow and tactical point of view Prejmerean (2009) considers that CRM represents the process of implementing a certain technology solution project and a variety of customer-oriented technology solutions.

Moreover, from a broader and strategic point of view CRM consists of all the strategies of managing relationships with customers with the purpose of creating shareholder benefits.

For Kotler and Armstrong (2012, p. 12)customer relationship management is the most important step making up the marketing process and the representative icon of modern marketing.

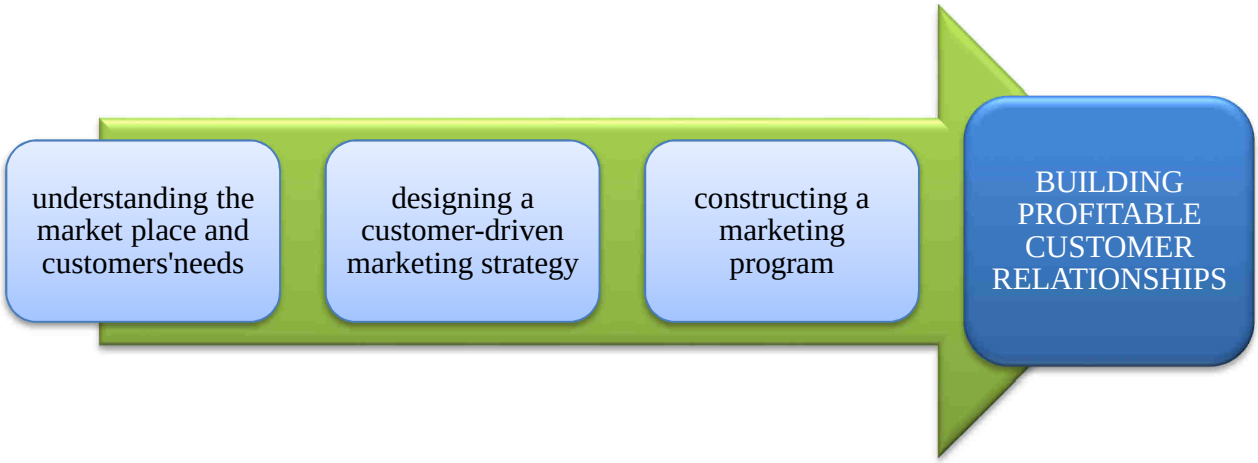


Figure 5.Steps of marketing process
Source: Own illustration

For them customer relationship management is the process whose main purpose is to build and to maintain further on profitable relationships with customers by delivering them satisfaction in the

form of superior quality products and services. Customer loyalty is reached through managing the acquired information regarding customers and their sensitive points.

For other marketers, customer relationship management has a narrower meaning, namely "customer data management activity" (Kotler, Armostrong 2012, p). On the contrary, some others consider a broader meaning and it refers to the complex process of acquiring, retaining and growing customers by serving their constantly changing needs and preferences and thus establishing a long-term beneficial relationship for both the supplier and the customer.

From the IT perspective, CRM is "the automation of horizontally integrated business processes involving front office customer contact points (marketing, sales, service and support) via multiple, interconnected delivery channels"(Peelen 2005, p.3).

In other words, CRM became a matter of all the departments of an organization thanks to technological development which allows employees to have quick access at the customers' database and to share the new acquired information.

From another perspective that does not even mentions the importance of technology, CRM is a series of activities which include the identification of customers, the storage of customer knowledge, the establishment of valuable relationships with customers and, least but not last, the shaping of customers' beliefs and perceptions regarding the organization as a hole, but also its products or services. This definition is focused on the process of getting to know the customers, of spotting their sensitive points and of serving their individual needs and preferences.

Another definition is related to the concept of "*real time marketing*" (Peelen 2005, p.5) and it refers to the process of building an infrastructure that makes it easier for the organization to create long-term profitable relationships with their customers. In other words, thanks to the rapid technological development, the barrier separating the supplier and the customers are left aside.

Customers have the possibility to have a look inside the organization and investigate its structure but also its stock of products in real time. Everything becomes transparent for the customer. Information that before was hidden or inaccessible is now revealed.

On the other hand, the supplier has the possibility to gather information about the customers and to contact them. In addition, it is very important for the supplier as well as for the customer to take care about what kind of information they are willing to share one with the other because information can be easily violated.

Shortly, customer relationship management is considered a business strategy meant to develop mutually-profitable relationships between suppliers and customers which are based on a so-called IT infrastructure capable of enabling certain processes and of appointing appropriate personnel in the required position for the entire process to function efficiently.

In conclusion CRM is the strategy that makes it possible for the back office to accomplish with all the promises delivered to customers by the front office. Therefore, the implementation of CRM requires the collaboration between all the departments of an organization: HR, management, production, logistics, finance, IT, marketing.

1.5. Customer acquisition vs. Customer retention

CRM requires companies to differentiate "*customer acquisition*" from "*customer retention*" (Prejmerean& Dima, 2006). Kotler (2003) observes that customers have become increasingly demanding, more price sensitive and less forgiving. Moreover, the competition's good or better offerings make it even harder to attract new customers.

And whereas companies focus on all the other activities such as merchandising, advertising or sales analysis, they forget that the most important and difficult aspect also is retaining the customer. And for this, the company must invest in service satisfaction to gain customers' trust. Consequently, they become less price-sensitive and they tend less to access the competition's services.

Figure 6.Factors of influence for customers' acquisition
Source: Prejmerean, M C 2009

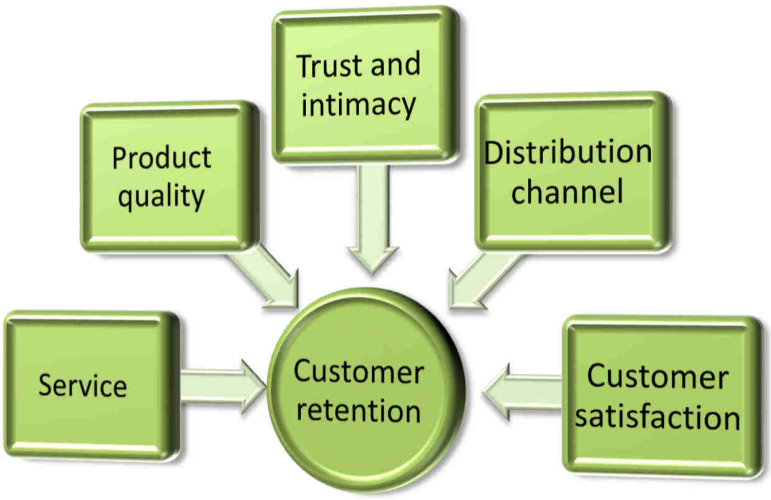


Figure 7.Factors of influence for customers' retention
Source: Prejemrean, M C 2009

1.6. Types of CRM

Straightmarketing.com identifies three types of CRM:

1. **Operational CRM:** deals with the automation of business processes related to the front-office customer contact points. In other words, it is concerned with the products and services offered to the consumers.
   For instance, it refers to sales automation, marketing automation and customer service automation. Some examples are represented by web sites, contact centres and other related databases.

2. **Analytical CRM:** deals with the storage, analysis, organization, interpretation and use of data obtained from the operational phase of the business' processes. It is concerned with the customer data analysis with the purpose of designing effective marketing campaigns based on the knowledge about consumers.
   Some relevant examples are related to the process of decision making for products and services, to the pricing strategies and to new products development as well.

3. **Collaborative CRM:** is concerned with the communication and interaction with customers with the purpose of obtaining their feedback but also of identifying possible

existing issues. Therefore, collaborative CRM makes it easy for customers, the organization and its employees to keep in touch via a variety of tools. These tools refer to web pages, email and even telephone communication.

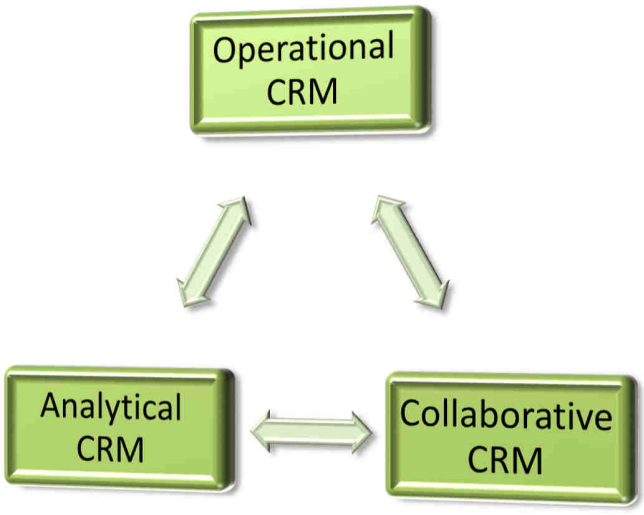


Figure 8.Types of CRM
Source: Own illustration

1.7. CRM functions

In an attempt of defining CRM from the point of view of its functions, Prejmerean (2009) identified 9 main functions of customer relationship management as follows:

1. **Information collection and storage:** deals with the process of acquiring relevant information about the customers of a company. After information is collected, it is organized as a database and the stored information is accessed afterwards with the purpose of selecting the most appropriate customers whose needs to be served individually.

2. **Customer selection:** this process is based on the collected information which divides customers into profitable groups for the company and unprofitable ones. Based on this, the organization decides which of its customers to invest to establish a profitable long-term relationship with them.

3. **Determination of customer value:** it is the principal element of building strong customer relationships and it refers to the quality delivered by the company to its customers as well as the value brought back into the company by the satisfied customers. For instance, customer lifetime value refers to the value of purchases made by a customer during a life time. It is determined by the difference between the benefits of using a certain product or service and the cost of acquiring it.

4. **Determination of customer needs:** it is the process according to which companies must spot their customers' main necessities and accomplish with them individually.

5. **Customer orientation:** it refers to the commitment of an organization to its customers' needs and satisfaction. Customer orientation means that the company focuses mainly on its clients and on delivering them high quality products and services, as well as establishing a long-term relationship with them.

6. **Customer satisfaction:** it refers to the company's involvement in delivering high quality products and services with the purpose of satisfying customers' basic needs as well as their different tastes and preferences. This is the basic generator of customer loyalty.

7. **Customer loyalty:** it is related to the value delivered by an organization which determines customers to stick with a certain product and not access competition's products or services. This way there is the certainty that customers will re-buy a certain product or will re-use a certain service.

8. **Customer retention:** it is a main measure of quality and it refers to the ability of a company to keep its customers for as long as possible by delivering them constant value and satisfaction.

9. **Customer acquisition:** it refers to the process of attracting new customers whose needs will be addressed by the company to establish long-term profitable relationships with the purpose of retaining these new customers for a longer time.

Figure 9.CRM functions
Source: Own illustration

1.8. CRM instruments

In her article, Prejmerean (2006) outlined a variety of instruments used in customer relationship management. These instruments are used for keeping a permanent dialogue with customers to influence their expectations and to overcome the effects of consumption also. The main CRM instruments are:

-**Fidelity cards** are special cards which can offer customers special discounts by accumulating fidelity points for their purchasing. They are important instruments in gathering valuable information about customers' buying behaviour.

-**Direct-mail** is represented by documents such as letters or catalogues sent directly at the customers' address in a representative moment of their life.

-**Newsletters** are shared with customers to let them know about new product offerings, special discounts or particular events related to the offered products or services.

-**Clients' clubs** are groups of customers who share the main characteristics and who are offered various opportunities according to their social status and expectations. The best-known clubs are the so-called VIP-Club, Lifestyle-Club or Fun-Club.

-**Online marketing** is based on the Internet traffic and on the activities performed on Web-sites. Online marketing includes a variety of operations such as advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotions, personal selling which are cheaper thanks to the use of virtual space.

-**Event-marketing** has key performance in three main areas according to Fill (2002), namely the corporation when trying to build the brand image, the product when trying to increase sales and the community when trying to bring benefits in the local community.

-**Telemarketing** is highly accountable because it is focused on interaction, flexibility and quick feed-back. Thanks to this, responses are easily collected and results are accountable.

-**The price policy** refers to the various discounts and loyalty offerings that a company implements to reward loyal customers but also to attract new ones.

-**The product policy** refers to the main product including the quality of the product, its design, technical characteristics or packaging and is represented by all sorts of guarantees offered with the product as well as a special telephone line which can be accessed by customers.

-**The distribution policy** is related to the distribution channel and it is focused on the customer and on his special needs and preferences.

1.9. Brand endorsement

Even if it was not given too much attention in marketing literature, product endorsements and its related advertising cues, namely brand popularity and event sponsorship, are referential factors when it comes to consumers' buying behaviour and its terms of influence. Dwane (1999) underlines the positive effect that the three mentioned cues in his article have upon consumers' brand perceptions.

Brand endorsement is a form of advertising which requires public personalities and celebrities to become the representatives of a brand. Brand endorsement is based on the high recognition of these famous names and on the thrust they have built around people. Therefore, companies use these already strengthened brand images to promote their products and services (The Economic Times, para.1). Brand endorsement is an expensive form of advertising but it is one that can save the image of a product and even make it last longer. Moreover, it is a psychological strategy of attracting customers and of influencing their buying behaviour.

Brand or product endorsement can be used in the case of "brand development" (Riezbos, Kist&Kootstra) and it functions as a determinator which gives the product a strong starting point. It is not recommended for brands to use celebrity endorsement in the beginning phase of their establishment on the market when their values are not very well known by the public. An

essential aspect is also related to the perception that consumers have regarding certain public figures . Therefore, when choosing the person that should be the represenattive of a brand, it is essential to choose right because a well chosen celebrity can bring the product on the front line and can convince the audience about its quality.

It has been many years ago, around 1920, that this technique was used for the first time and advertisers started to use famous people for the endorsement of products. As stated by Mukherjee (2009) in his article among the first celebrities who became brand ambasadors were actresses Joan Crawford, Clara Bow and Janet Gaynor.

Moreover, in USA one in three television commercials were using celebrity endorsements ten years ago and today it seems that the percentage of brands using this technique is increasing, reaching 20%. Latest research shows also that the highest rated commercials are those with celebrities' appearances, respectively 8 out of 10 (Mukherjee, 2009).

From personal research, it has resulted that 61% of the questioned sample of people, respectively 98 persons, agreed that they are influenced by celebrities representing the image of a certain brand or product when they must choose between two or more products.

The other 39% denied this influence, stating that they only look for quality products independently of their brand recognition. They support the idea that if a product is endorsed by a public person it does not mean that the product reaches the level of quality that it is given in marketing.

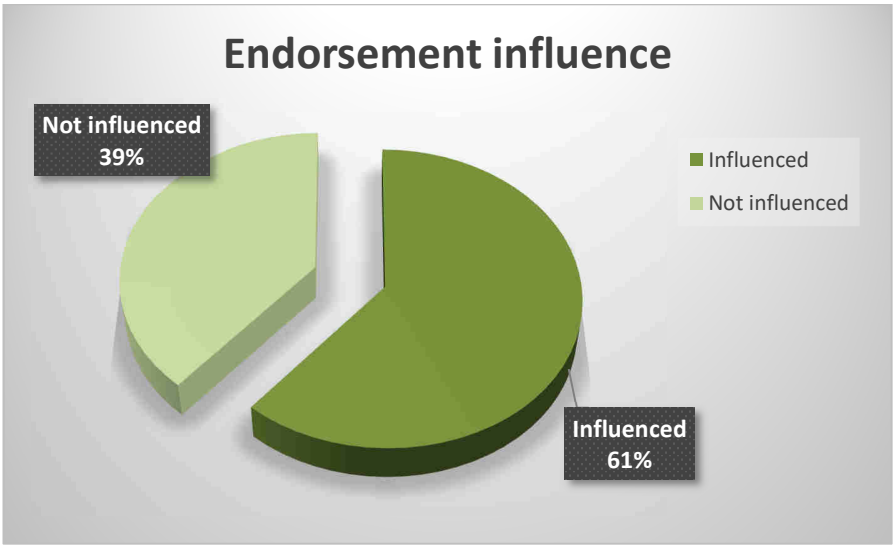


Figure 10.Endorsement influence
Source: Own illustration

In Romania, the brand endorsement technique is not characterised by a very long tradition. It has been not too much time since Romanian companies have understood that celebrity endorsements bring a positive evolution for brands and products.

Moreover, the advertising industry has known more involvement and investment recently and companies use celebrities in order to inspire buyers and to trigger the buying process.

Regarding Spanish practices of endorsing brands, we can say that the country enjoys some of the most famous people on earth to potentiate publicity for big brands and not only. According to its article, Jose Martinez states that between 20 and 25% of the nowadays commercials use the endorsement technique to potentiate marketing and brand recognition. (Jose A. Martinez, 2017).

However, not all marketing authors and specialists agree with the endorsement practice, struggling to demonstrate that using celebrities in order to commercialize a product can bring serious damage to the brand.

According to J. Martinez's research, various authors question this issue when it comes to the effectiveness of this practice. This is how we get to know about the so called "brand vampires", those celebrities that shine so much in comparison with the product that they represent that finally they vanish the expected effect of the endorsement: bringing into the light the product not the person.

This is explained by specialists as an effect of the incongruity between the celebrity and the brand that it represents, mostly because its activity does not match the industry or field that the product comes from.

According to J. Martinez, specialists tried to deepen this issue in order to point out the negative aspects of brand endorsement, of course in the case when the practice is applied in a wrong direction.

Theirs supposition are based on a series of tests and studies that brought into their attention information that support their statement according to which brand endorsement has negative effects for the increase of brand recognition.

Methodology and results

There are outlined 4 types of studies which contributed to the shaping of 4 basic theories on the negative effects of brand endorsement as follows:

Study 1

Sample of potential consumers	**992**
Brand	**Schwarzkopf**
Endorsers	**Cindy Crowford and Unknown model**

Table 1.Study 1 References
Source: Own illustration

Step 1. There was developed a commercial for the Schwarzkopf brand having as endorser the famous model Cindy Crowford.

Step 2. The same commercial was replacing Cindy Crowford with un unknown model having similar characteristics as Cindy.

Step 3. The 2 commercials were visualized by the sample of consumers, divided in 2 groups, among 6 seconds.

Results:

* The group that visualized the endorsed commercial had less spontaneous than the group that visualized the not endorsed commercial.

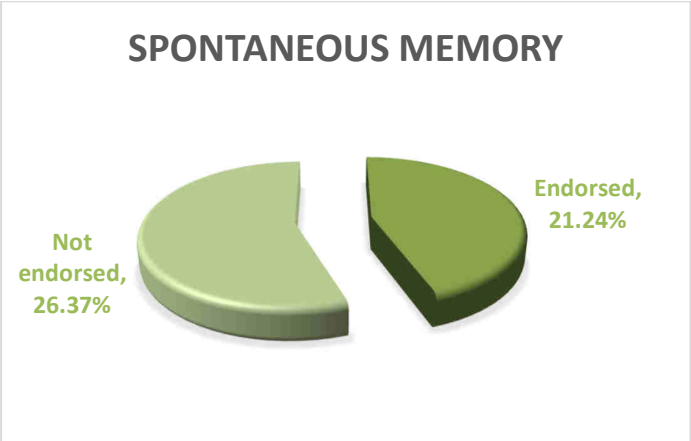


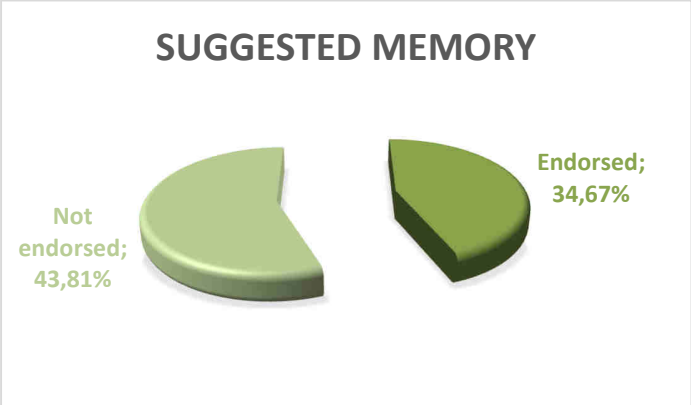
Figure 11.Spntaneous memory
Source: Own illustration

Results Spontaneous Memory

Endorsed	**Not endorsed**
21.24%	26.37%

Table 2.Results spontaneous memory
Source: Own illustration

* The group that visualized the endorsed commercial had less suggested memories about the brand than the group that visualized the not endorsed commercial.



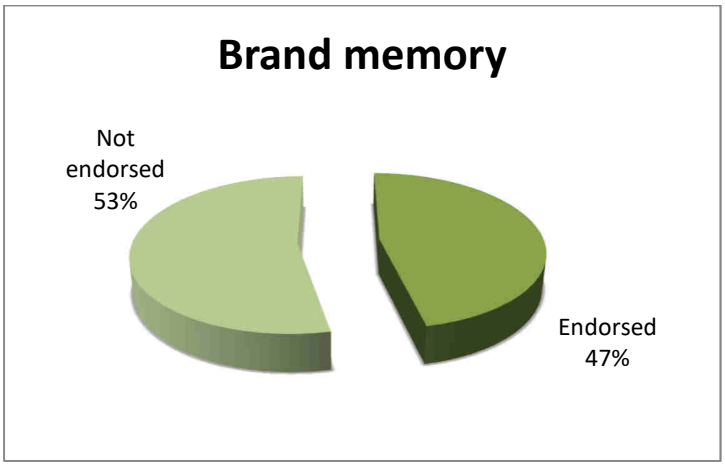
Results Suggested Memory

Endorsed	**Not endorsed**
21.24%	**26.37%**

Table 3.Results suggested memory
Source: Own illustration

Figure 12.Suggested memory
Source: Own illustration

* The group that visualized the endorsed commercial had less memories about the name of the specific product than the group that visualized the not endorsed commercial.



Results Brand Memory

Endorsed	**Not endorsed**
36.87%	**42.19%**

Table 4.Results brand memory
Source: Own illustration

Figure 13.Brand memory
Source: Own illustration

Study 2

Sample of potential consumers	**526**
Brand	**Calvin Klein and Blend-a-med**
Endorsers	**Heidi Klum and Unknown model**

Table 5.Study 2 references
Source: Own illustration

Study no. 2 had similar procedure as the study no.1, with the difference that this time there were employed 2 brands in the research.

Step 1. One group of people visualized the endorsed commercials and the other one the no endorsed commercial.

Results:

The results, once more, proved that the "vampire effect" is real and that it affects the brand recognition. There was no difference between the two brands, the result was similar: brand recognition was higher for the not endorsed commercials in both cases (Calvin Klein and Blend-a-med) and lower for the endorsed commercials.

Study 3

Sample of potential consumers	**529**
Brand	**Calvin Klein and Kenneth Cole (sun glasses)**
Endorsers	**Steven Raab (German speaker) and Unknown model**

Table 6.Study 3 references
Source: Own illustration

Results:

Again the "brand vampire" effect occurred. People had better memories about the not endorsed brand and less about the brand endorsed by a celebrity. There was no difference between the two brands as popularity, the "vampire effect" occurred in similar measure in both cases.

Study 4

Sample of potential consumers	**2923**
Brand	**8 brands**
Endorsers	**16 celebrities**

Table 7.Study 4 references
Source: Own illustration

Results:

The study revealed the following effects:

* **"Brand vampire" effect occurs independently on the brand familiarization.** The celebrity's presence was decreasing the brand recognition no matter which one that was.
* The congruence between the brand and its endorser was increasing the brand recognition.
* The affiliation between the celebrity and the brand was increasing the brand recognition.

Conclusion

As a conclusion of their studies, specialists outlined the following theories on the negative effect that brand endorsement has on the recognition of brands and thus on the success of the marketing campaign based on this technique:

- **Brand recognition is lower when the product is represented by a celebrity and increases when the product is represented by a normal person, of the same characteristics as the celebrity.**

The explanation is clear: the known stimulus is easier processed than the new information and it distracts the attention from the other visual stimuli. This could be the case of an already well-known brand or a new brand on the market.

For example: **George Clooney** is one of the best known actors from all times. The new collaboration with the coffee brand **Nespresso** brought him into the light with the brand new commercial **"Nespresso, what else?".**

Despite the very well focused product and the intentions of this advertising campaign, the endorser George Clooney threatens to distract all the attention from the product, emphasising thus the conclusion that our specialists try to implement: that a celebrity advertisement reduces the impact of the product and focuses on the already known stimulus: the person. Indeed, the iconic figure of the actor seem to be brought from another history than a coffee world.

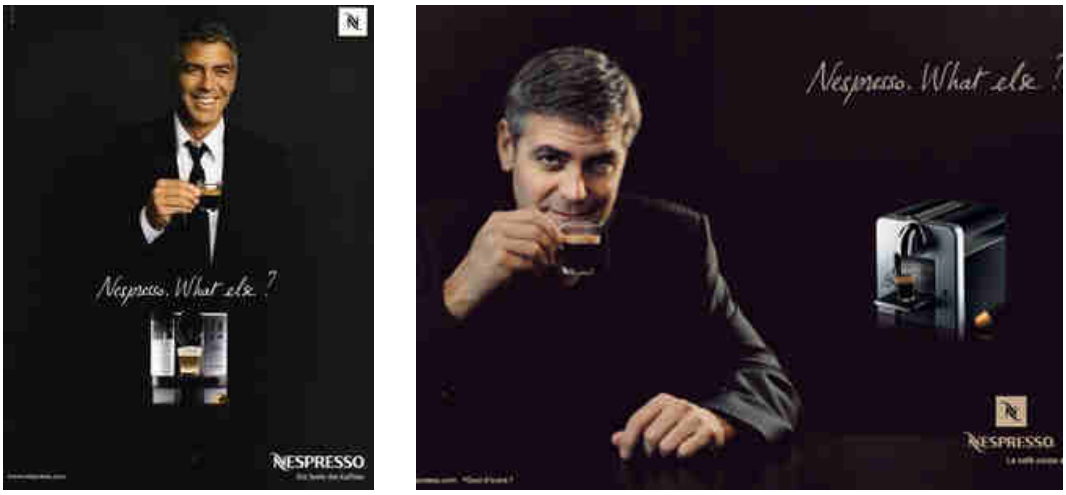


Figure 14.Nespresso campaign
Source: www.google.es

On the other side, there is the strategic advertising campaign that DOVE developed during the year 2015: **"Real beauty"** when the brand used normal characters for its image in order to transmit the message that beauty lays within each of us and that the product addresses all the women in the world, independently on their characteristics.

For this campaign, Dove became a very appreciate brand and as a result, sales increased with 25% across the entire Dove brand during the campaign and generated 2.3% market share. (Lindsey Morel. 2009)

In the opposite direction was the Victoria´s Secrets campaign **"Love your body"** because the models used for the image of the campaign gave people the feeling that you can love your body when it looks like that of Victoria's Secrets models. And what happens with the rest of the women who do not have the perfect shape that the campaign was promoting?

Obviously, the effect was disappointing, discouraging a big number of women who cannot reach the standards that the campaign set and that "seems to have struck a nerve", according to Liz Dwyer who writes the following: "Harmful campaign. I am not perfect and I don't expect it either. What a shame!" tweeted Cinthia Novick—language that sums up the majority of Twitter comments directed at the company."

Figure 15.Love your body campaign
Source: www.google.es

- **The negative effect of using celebrity endorsement is higher when the brand recognition is lower- the already known brand is easier processed.**

- **The negative effect of celebrity endorsement on the brand recognition is higher when there is low congruency between the endorser and the endorsed brand. The reason is that the congruent information is easily processed and remembered afterwards.**

Example: the simplest and most representative example which brings together both of the above mentioned mistakes is the launching campaign of a new milk brand from Coca Cola – Fair Life. The characters used in the marketing campaign are beauties from the 70', reflecting the famous Marilyn Monroe. The campaign features the women who wear dresses made by milk.

Firstly, 70's celebrities' presence attracts the attention from the name of the brand and from its characteristics. Marilyn Monroe style commercial converts the brand image in something that it is not. Therefore, people will be more attracted by their unusual postures and by the novelty of the idea, which reflects one of the negative effects that this endorsement has.

Secondly, there is no congruence between the sensual Marilyn Monroe and a pack of milk. Her presence makes everybody think about beauty, sensuality, feminism. The commercial could better be associated with a make-up, styling or design product, and less with a brand of milk, aspect which reflects the other mistake just outlined.

Not to mention that the commercial received countless injuries from the side of the public as they consider the perspective as being "sexist" and thus the brand annoyed until madness a great quantity of those who could have been potential consumers. (A. Klausner, 2014)

Figure 16.Fair life campaign
Source: www.google.es

On the other side, a great example of success for a new brand that used as an endorser a celebrity with who it had no correlation was Kalise, ice-cream brand. Thanks to this collaboration, Kalise became known among entire Spain over the night with the minimum of effort.

It was endorsed by the famous football player, Andres Iniesta, F.C. Barcelona player, who was only saying a simple phrase at the end of the commercial: **"Kalise for everybody!".**
It could be all a lucky synergy between this man and the unpopular, white brand, Kalise, but what it is clear is that this collaboration was a perfect matching for the ice-cream brand.

And so the two results that the specialists proofed through studies are successfully denied, showing that a good strategy at the right moment can be of a priceless benefit.

Figure 17. Kalise campaign
Source: www.google.es

- **The negative effect of brand endorsement over brand recognition is lower when there is a strong link between the brand and the celebrity due to a very wide known commercial or due to a long-term collaboration between the brand and the celebrity.**

For example: **Penelope Cruz** is a worldwide famous Spanish actress who endorses not only national brands. At the end, we cannot say which one is more famous that the other: the product or the personality.

In other words, the celebrity might interest more than the product that it tries to emphasise, however, thanks to the already high recognition of the product on the market, the effect is magnificent: the character fits perfectly the products as she shares the same values and characteristics as the represented products, icon of beauty and style.

Figure 18.Penelope Cruz campaign
Source: www.google.es

In the same time there are specialists who conduct studies in order to show how brand endorsement brings a competitive advantage to the brand by having various positive effects of its evolution.

According to them, brand endorsement is directed towards the public following three directions:

- **Cognitive** (increase brand recognition),
- **Affective** (modify the perceived image of the brand),
- **Behavioural** (change the purchase decision or product). (Jose A. Martinez, 2017)

Of course, these above directions or effects depend on different variables such as:

* Celebrity gender,
* Celebrity type,
* Congruency with the brand,
* Support to the brand,
* Media exposure,
* Familiarization with the brand.

The results of this investigation were as follows:

Hypothesis/Research	Result	Specific finding
H1 (cognitive)	Rejected	No average effects of celebrity endorsements on customers' awareness.
H2 (affective)	Partially confirmed	Positive effect of celebrity endorsement on costumers' behaviour when compared to no endorsements.
H3 (behavioural)	Rejected	There were no average effects of endorsements on consumers' behavioural intentions.
H4 (endorser sex)	Confirmed	Male endorser perform better than female endorsers do.
H5 (endorser type)	Partially confirmed	Actors perform better than models, musicians or TV hosts.
H6 (endorser match)	Confirmed	Congruent endorsers perform better than incongruent ones.
H7 (endorsement explicitness)	Rejected	Implicit endorsements perform better than explicit ones.
H8 (endorsement frequency)	Rejected	Endorsement frequency has no impact on consumer responses.
H9 (familiarity)	Confirmed	Endorsements of unfamiliar objects perform better than endorsements or familiar objects do.

Table 8.Results of investigation
Source: adapted from www.scienciasinmiedo.es/b199/

Example:

Ilie Nastase, famous Romanian tennis man, has been Adidas brand ambassador for more than 40 years. He signed the contract when the brand was in its first years on the market and this made people associate the brand with hard work, performance and trust, a brand for winners (Varsandan, 2013).

Back then the purpose had cognitive nature, namely increasing brand recognition in Romania as it was the beginning of Adidas expansion in the country. However, later Adidas understood that the startegy was associating the values that Ilie Nastase was inspiring to people and it led its marketing strategy towards a more affective scope, inspiring trust, performace and power to people, thus changing their perception regarding the brand.

Nowadays Adidas is still the brand of the winner, of passion and love for sports.

Figure 19.Ilie Nastase
Source: www.google.ro

Figure 20.Adidas brand
Source: www.google.es

Simona Halep is a representative figure in the field of contemporary tennis. She is the Romanian symbol of passion, ambition and performance as she became number 5 tennis figure worldwide.

This is the reason why Mercedes Romania proposed her collaboration as a Brand Ambassador of the product. The aim is to associate the brand with the idea of top performance and elegancy, exactly what according to Philipp Hagenburger - Managing Director Passenger Cars and CEO Mercedes-Benz Romania - Simona represents.

Again, the marketing strategy is directed towards the affective perspective of the buying behaviour and why not, towards the behavioural direction also, as the Mercedes marketing team hopes to switch peoples' buying decisions from direct competitors towards Mercedes brand.

Figure 21.Mercedes campaign
Source: www.google.ro

Stela Popescu and Alexandru Arsinel are credible media personalities and well-known artists on the Romanian theatre stage and the trust and respect they inspire to people have converted them into the most appropriate brand endorsers for Catena pharmacies. In its early development on the Romanian market, Catena collaborated with the two characters in order to promote its new presence on the market.

The aim was principally **affective**: associating the brand with the values that the two characters represented for the people: trustworthy, responsibility, care and confidence. Why??? Because confidence is the first step towards the buying decision and the company had it clear. Their strategy was well measure.

In the same time the direction of this collaboration was **cognitive**: creating brand recognition among potential customers and thus creating a fast introduction on the market for the new brand.

Figure 22.Catena campaign
Source: www.google.ro

Later on, the consistency of the collaboration with the same endorsers had **behavioural** purposes: convincing people to chose Catena products and to switch from their normal supplier.

2. CAPTER II – PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY

Self-improvement has become a goal for everyone lately. Some people might put more emphasis on their self-development relatively to others, but in the end the primary goal of humanity is to be a little bit better tomorrow than today. Therefore, it is a fact that around $500 million is spent on personal development products yearly in the last period (Gaille, 2014). Gaille (2014) estimates that the net worth of the self-development industry is estimated around $11 billion and it consists of market segments from holistic approaches, motivational speakers, inspirational websites, personal coaching, and other forms of personal development. This market is characterized by a fast-increasing trend as its growth rate is estimated at over 5% each year.

Studies show according to Gaille (2004) that women utilize the personal development industry at a higher level than men do. This is believed to be determined by the societal approach toward gender. The society expects women to respect certain standards which are superior to those that men must comply with. The women are expected to be perfect and beautiful. This is the reason why women look toward how to improve themselves more than men as it is a requirement of the society.

Some statistics related to this industry show that:

- The first book dealing with personal development aspects was called “Self Help” and it was written in 1859 and over 13 million books on personal development were sold in 2007.
- This industry generates over $1 billion in revenues yearly.
- The trend showed a continuous increase in sales except for 2008 when a 5% drop was recorded.
- The most important sector of this industry with the greatest market share is represented by the holistic institutes and personal training centers that offer personal and professional development tips, and these represent around 50% of the total revenues resulted from the industry
- From the demographic point of view the industry appeals to the middle-aged women who have discretionary economic possibilities and the required free time for this kind of activities.
- An interesting fact is that Deepok Chopra made $1.3 million through a book and speaking tour that promoted a basic principle and technique: to take responsibility for your own actions.

It is essential to outline that this is a continuous changing industry, where competitive advantage is a must. Today’s people’s motivation of transforming their passion into lifetime professions leads to a great increase of the demand in the most creative domains of activity.

3. CHAPTER III - CASE STUDY ON DALLES GO

3.1. Company description

History

The after-work training platform named DallesGO was born five years ago, on a day that, it is naturally associated with new beginnings and change: 15th of September. The 12 courses which make up a season are dedicated to people connected to what is new, who want to turn their hobbies and passions into a profession. The teachers have spectacular careers, they are willing to pass on their know-how and they are renowned professionals in the fields they represent. The company aims to recruit talented people and to promote them.

The courses are interactive and they give people the opportunity to try out their skills in real time, to develop creative projects with a great impact and to take benefit of networking in a professional and social context. Each course has a specific purpose - be an exhibition, an online activation or a specific project.

Type of company

DallesGo is a limited liability company with a sole shareholder who takes in charge the administration and management position of the company. It is a small business with no more than 5 employees sharing tasks in an environment comprising all the needed departments: HR, PR, finance and legal one.

Type of activity

The company sells high quality services in the form of 16 categories of after-work courses as presented by their last campaign brochure. Moreover, DallesGo offers their students the appropriate studying conditions, materials and equipment and opportunities to practice further on their passion. In consequence customers are satisfied and their loyalty is proved through the decision of applying for other courses as well.

1. **Fashion design:** the course is addressed to those who wish to have an insight in the deepest layers of fashion and fashion design. Starting from the basic idea, the students will write their own stories adapted to the contemporary world.
2. **Fashion styling:** the courses are dedicated to any fashion enthusiast who wants to start a career as a fashion stylist or for those who want to deepen notions about clothing styles. The

course is for those who take fashion seriously and use it daily as an expression language. "Trends do not dictate but direct" (www.dallesgo.ro).

3. **Make-up:** a person may be the mirror image of his personality. And makeup can bring out the inner beauty. The courses are conducted based on the idea that everyone has artistic skills and everyone can learn on his/her own person or model, how to highlight the advantage a girl has or how to blur the less flattering ones. The students benefit from professional makeup products exclusively offered by the company's partner M · A · C Cosmetics and enjoy a discount on products purchased in M · A · C stores.

"The beauty of make-up is that you can always create a character to play. When you get bored, you can delete everything and start all over again" (www.dallesgo.ro).

4. **Hairstyling:** the course is the first module of specialization in trade of hairstylist, is for those who want to turn their passion into a successful career in hair-dressing industry. Under the guidance of top GETT'S Artistic Team stylists, participants discover the latest trends in hair and professional styling, as well as the laws of colorsand haircut techniques. The courses are supplemented by intensive practice in the GETT'S salons, and at the end of the three months training participants will receive accredited diplomas.

Figure 23.DallesGo promotional materials
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

5. **Interior design:** is a discipline still young in Romania, whose practice involves a solid theoretical and practical knowledge of styles theory, familiarity with the concepts of ergonomics, as well as layers work on plans and views. These workshops include direct applications of current trends knowledge regarding interior design and practical applications that illustrate how to work with different materials and textures, the aim of the course being

that of teaching students to combine aesthetics with utility, taking into account the ratio of form - function - emotional comfort.

6. **Photography:** two teachers, photographers from different generations, with extensive expertise in the study of image and impressive portfolios, will guide students through fascinating references, photographic genres and techniques. Through these courses students will practice their skills and they will be able to implement their ideas and talents in a professional context, benefiting from dedicated photographic equipment offered by Photo Hobby Shop. Through the creative practice sessions, students will build their own photographic portfolio of projects.

"Photography goes beyond technique. It is an instrument of love and revelation!" (www.dallesgo.ro).

7. **Acting:** the 12 months course means discovering the exciting backstage actor profession, having fun and getting to know yourself better. Two acting teachers, from completely different generations, will teach this course, revealing theatre and film enthusiasts what acting means from several angles.

Figure 24.DallesGo flyers
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

8. **Cooking:** the course promises a delightful cooking experience for enthusiasts and gourmands with chef skills. Together with their teacher and the partner, Mega Image, DallesGO students will embark on an exciting culinary journey, which means cooking know-how, skill, creativity, tricks and fun.

9. **Mindfulness:** a course which will enrich your knowledge and meditation about yourself and which will teach you how to direct your thoughts to the present moment, to relax and to trust more in your own strengths. This is a real technique that will apply a series of exercises adaptable to every person's life.

10. **Public speaking:** the course is addressed to all those who wish to reach a higher level concerning speaking skills with the purpose of increasing performance in their personal and professional life. It will teach students how to adapt their speech in order to catch the attention of their public.

11. **Entrepreneurial skills:** the course is addressed to people who want to enrich their entrepreneurial thinking. It will involve outside reading as well as homework, interactive discussion and class activities.

12. **Personal branding:** the course addresses to the people who want to become leaders and a strong successful brand. Students will be taught about the best-known brands in the world, about how to bring outside the best in people, about how to build an unforgettable first impression and about the art of conversation

Figure 25.DallesGo advertising campaign materials
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

13. **PR:** the PR courses are designed for both professionals and those who aspire to a career in public relations. The implemented curriculum focuses on case studies and real situations facing professionals in the field. is preparing a dynamic and attractive course with many practical exercises, briefs and real customers, exchange of ideas and special guests from the industry. Over 12 meetings, participants learn how to write a PR strategy, how to develop a corporate social responsibility program, how to communicate through conventional media

channels, but also through social media, to organize events, to quickly resolve image crises and how to take control over effective communication.

14. **Marketing online:** the course presents case studies on e-commerce real situations which deal with mistakes and difficulties encountered by online shops in Romania. Moreover, it is focused on developing strategic business plans and marketing campaigns for the new online shops.

15. **E-commerce:** the course proposes a thrilling journey through the mechanisms and approaches that generate interactivity in the digital environment, providing a coherent assimilation of its role in the lives of people in the marketing and online entrepreneurship. The two teachers prepare 12 fascinating weeks of research of online communication tools, of situations and strategies used in the construction of coherent campaigns in every field.
" The digital Future comes with unexpected opportunities for those brave and willing to learn" (www.dallesgo.ro).

16. **Social media:** for companies and start-ups open to online communication, social media can be an effective alternative and more affordable than traditional media. During the course students will learn how the social networks work, what kind of instruments they provide and how they can integrate them effectively in any communication strategy.

Figure 26.DallesGo promotional tools
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

Figure 27.Evolution of courses
Source: Own illustration

Mission statement, vision, objectives identification

Mission statement: "We teach passion"

Vision: "We encourage our students to learn from the best and we support creativity expression in a context of increasing focus on results. So, we decided to invest more in educating and supporting our students' passions, through an extension of another six weeks courses, where they will have the opportunity to deepen the areas in which they want to develop. Along with our teachers, we want to enrich our students' professional experiences and improve the excellence that we want to deliver to them every season", said Cristian Banica, Universul DallesGO brand manager in the interview conducted in the research period.

Objectives identification:

- to promote students' passions and skills
- to facilitate their access to alternative learning environments
- to provide them the opportunity of professional growth in their domains of interest
- to transform their passions into professions

- to give students the opportunity to try out these skills in real time, to develop creative projects with a great impact and to take benefit of networking in a professional and social context
- to provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills as to reach the final purpose of the courses: be an exhibition, an online activation or a specific project (Interview with the manager).

3.2. Financial indicators

The most important financial indicators, representative for the financial situation of the organization are the annual turnover, the profit and the market share. All these are characterized by a fast increase and are determined by the positive change in the number of students attending the courses.

On the other hand, the increasing number of students is determined by the strong advertising activities initiated by DallesGo as stated by the brand manager, Cristian Banica.

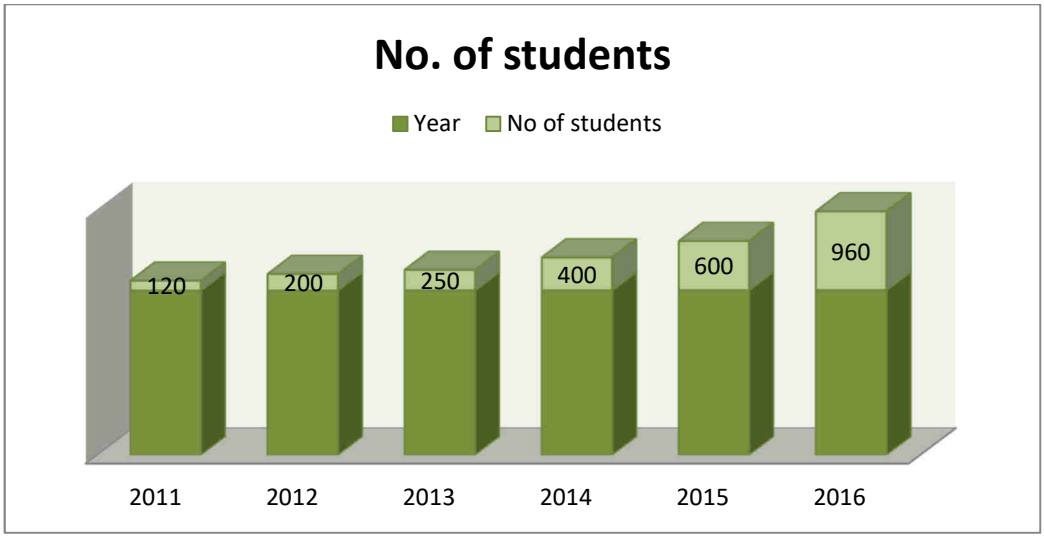


Figure 28.Evolution of number of students
Source: Own illustration

With an initial investment of 50,000 euro, S.C. Universul DallesGo S.R.L. has established the basis of what today is the best known after-work courses platform in Bucharest. It started with

120 students attending four types of courses, namely make-up, fashion styling, photography and interior design and it continued growing till reaching the number of 900 students in 2015.

The turnover representative for the first year was around 20,000 euro with a profit worth 25% from the annual turnover, meaning around 5000 euro.

The turnover tripled after the first year reaching 60,000 euro and in the third year it was worth approximately 90,000 euro.

In the fourth year the turnover increased with more than 100% reaching around 200,000 euro. For the last year the value of the turnover was estimated at 600,000 euro.

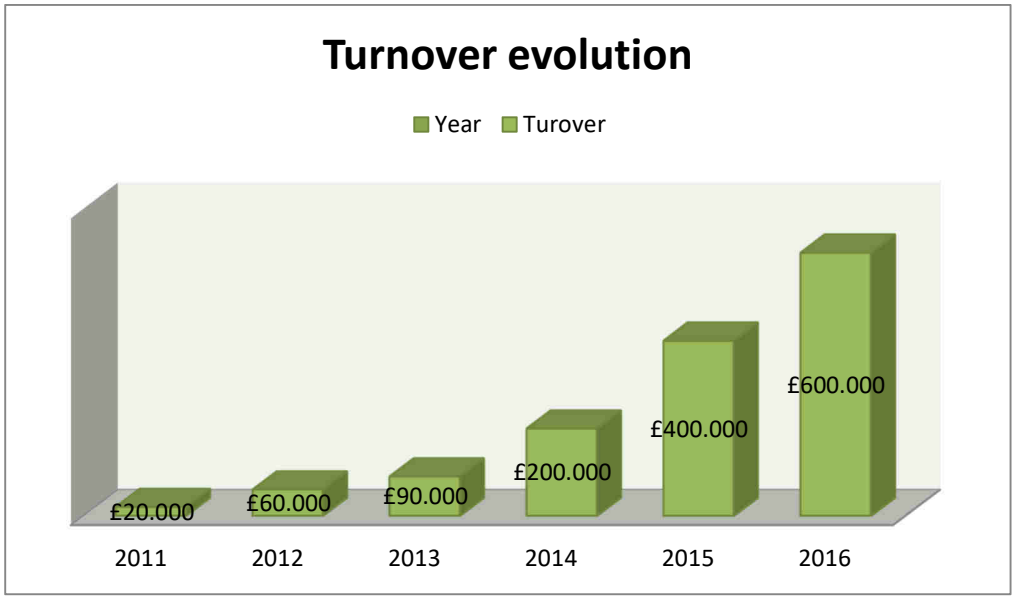


Figure 29.DallesGo turnover evolution
Source: Own illustration

In consequence, the profit met the same increase corresponding to the increase in annual turnover. After the first year the profit raised three times more in value reaching around 15,000 euro and doubled again in 2015 with regard to its value in 2014 valued at 100,000 euro.

For the last year the profit was estimated at 150,000 thus increasing with 50% from the year of 2015.

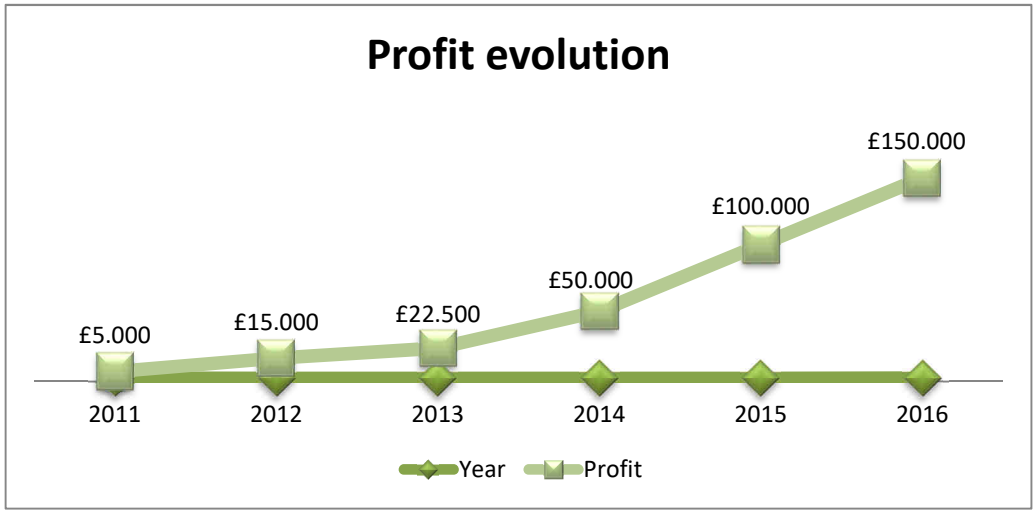


Figure 30.DallesGo profit evolution
Source: Own illustration

The investment in marketing campaigns is a constant effort for the organization because 30% from the turnover is reinvested back into the business in the form of two advertising campaigns, each of them taking place among one month and a half time period, respectively February-March and June-July.

As consequence of a rapid increase in turnover, the marketing investment has also known a sharply increase from 6,000 euro in 2011 to 120,000 euro in 2015. The estimated investment for the last year was valued at 180,000 euro.

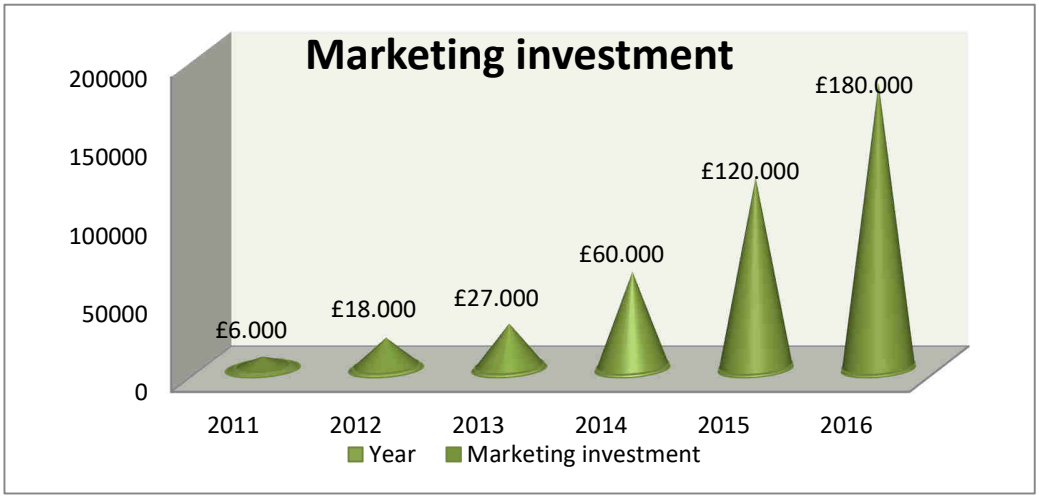


Figure 31.DallesGo marketing investment
Source: Own illustration

3.3. The company's position in the industry

Built with passion and strengthened with the desire to discover enthusiastic people and to provide them the context and opportunity to learn, grow and lead their creative hobbies at start-up and business level, Universul DallesGO is currently the best-known platform of interactive courses in Bucharest, becoming a benchmark for excellence in contemporary alternative education.

After five years, ten seasons and nearly 600 students, DallesGO continues to grow, giving students a fascinating experience through the interactivity of its programs and through access to the most creative names in the industry.

DallesGO is the most visible platform of after work courses in Bucharest, attracting more students with each generation and becoming a community of young professionals interested in higher training services in the field of creative industries.

With an initial investment of 50.000 euro and a market share of 60% DallesGo is a strong brand on the market and encounters a small number of competitors represented by schools specialized in specific fields of activity.

The most important competitors are coming from the make-up, interior design, PR, fashion design and cooking fields of the industry. Thanks to the quality of its services and to the strong marketing efforts, which can be valued at 30% of the annual turnover, DallesGo is situated on the frontline position and it is a number one choice for its customers.

The most important competitors on the market identified by the management and possible competitors on Spanish market are as follows:

Field	Competitors Romania - Bucarest	Competitors Spain-Madrid
Make-up	Cotimanis Professional Make-up School Anca Radulescu Make-up Schooh Ramona Chirita Make-up School Mirela Vescan Make-up School Christine Valmy Make-up School	The Artistry of Make-up School, Workshop Experience Make-up School Bogart Make-up School DNI School Beauty Factory
Interior design	Ilbah School Serban School	IED Madrid Imadde Insenia Design School Madrid
PR	Alex Negrea PR School	Emagister – Cursos

Fashion Design	Salomea School	IED Madrid
Cooking	Gourmet Cooking School	Cooking Point

Table 9.Competitors of DallesGo
Source: Own illustration

Unlike its competition, DallesGo invests time and financial effort in its CRM strategies as well as in the marketing campaigns it conducts before each season of courses. For this organization, the client and his inner passion are the core elements of its activities.

This is the reason why the costs are moderate and the courses can be accessed by all categories of people without exceptions and interdictions. And the most important the relationship with the customer goes beyond the teaching classes through constant online communication and interaction as well as thorough further collaboration and common projects for the future.

3.4. Internal and external research

It is important for the management to understand that the organization is operating in a system constantly influenced by many external factors which require a constant scan of the environment. In this respect, a swot analysis must be conducted in order to point out the strongest characteristics and points that the organization has as well as the weaknesses which have to be improved.

Moreover Porter (1998) suggests the analysis of competitors via his "*five forces model"*

A. Swot Analysis

Strengths

- Working with teachers represented by famous persons, specialists in their domain of activity: Lena Criveanu and Ovidiu Buta for the fashion design course, Irina Markovits for fashion styling, Narcisa Simandan for make-up pro, Geta Voinea for hairstyling, Oana Bulexa and Monica Jitariuc for PR, Cosmin Nastasa for marketing online.
- Having as partners well-known companies such as MAC Cosmetics, Gett's Salon, Meli Melo, New Look, Zara.
- Collaborating with some of the most important magazines such as Elle, Avantaje, ONE, Unica, Joy for whom DallesGo and its students prepare successful editorials.

- The “Open days” event which attracts a high number of potential customers
- The opportunities provided to the student through various collaborations, workshops, projects and events in important cultural locations in Bucharest.
- Courses begin at 6.30 in order to be reached by customers after work.
- The company provides students with models for their courses.
- The courses are divided into 3 categories: beginners, advanced, intensive.
- Most of the courses are accredited.
- The students have the alternative to pay the fee in two or three rounds.
- Working close to successful people and trustworthy public icons such as Andreea Raicu and Patrizzia Paglieri.
- A strong marketing campaign and representative attractive brochures which offer potential students all the information they may need related to the courses, structures and teachers.

Weaknesses

- There is no price differentiation between the students (eg. Discount offered to students).
- The targeted customers are the corporate ones and those having the possibility to pay the courses.
- The targeted age category is in between 28-45 years.
- Mothers with children are considered inappropriate as customers
- The low level of communication with models causes delays and problems at the courses.

Opportunities:

- Geographic expansion: expanding the idea of after-work courses outside Bucharest, in the most important regions of the country, increases the amount of popularity, as well as developing the company’s services quality. This is an important aspect because the company will be more visible on the market, this way having the possibility to gain competitive advantage. For instance, entering a new market in a new town brings with it new contacts and new projects, as well as opportunities to develop new ideas according to the specificity of the region.
- Increasing the quality and the complexity of their services in different areas according to the specific domains of interest, meaning that the business can grow and it can be extended by covering new fields.
- Concluding contracts with freelancers to provide further professional support for the students graduating the courses and the possibility to continue their careers.

- Developing a platform of after-school classes for children, making it possible for kids, not only for adults, to get involved in something they have a passion for.

Threats:

- Similar service offerings from the competitors on the market, which already have a tradition and a developed strategy.
- New companies entering on the market with the same offerings, but making better offers and promotions.
- Existing competitors or new entries on the market can come up with the same ideas and can attract their teachers and partners.
- The implementation of free similar courses or extended modules by different organizations and institutions, such as schools and universities, may represent an alternative for students who are willing to take a specific course at Universul DallesGo.

B. Porter's 5 forces model

1. Threat of new entrants

The most important factors that have effect on how much threat new entrants may pose are represented by:

- The existence of barriers to entry such as patents, trademarks and copyrights,
- Product differentiation: offering a variety of different products and services (for instance, DallesGo covers a larger segment of the industry through the differentiation of the offered services)
- Brand equity: the quality that the brand brings in its customers' mind and the value gained over time through hard work and delivered satisfaction.
- Access to distribution: here we speak about loyal partners and suppliers who are hardly attracted at the beginning. (for example, DallesGo has famous partners in the industry, such as MAC Cosmetics, GETT's Salon or Meli Melo)
- Customer loyalty to established brands: customers tend to choose well-known brands, with tradition in the industry, which they trust and admire: eg. The brand ambassador Andreea Raicu.

2. Threat of substitute services

Potential factors to affect the impact of new entrants over the company:

- Relative price performance of substitutes: changes in the price of substitutes affect customers' choice: increase in the price of substitutes lead to customer switching from the substitute to Dalles Go and decrease in the price of substitute results in a switch from DallesGo to the substituting company.
- Buyer switching costs: when the price of the substitute is lower, the customer tends to switch towards it.
- Perceived level of service differentiation: depending on the perception customers have upon the substitute, they may choose whether to stay with DallesGo or not.
- Number of substitute services available in the market: DallesGo does not have so many substitutes on the market, being the leader in the industry.
- Ease of substitution: DallesGo provides the highest quality and the most complex platform of courses on the market, making it hard for other companies to even come closer.
- Quality depreciation: whenever the customer feels that the quality of the services is going down, he can decide to move to any of its substitutes on the market. This is whyDallesGo is focused on customer satisfaction, customer acquisition and customer retention.

3. Bargaining power of customers (buyers)

Factors to affect the customers' effect over the company:

- Degree of dependency upon existing channels of distribution: customers who feel the need for DallesGo services will not switch to another company.
- Buyer switching costs relative to firm switching costs: depending on the increase or decrease in prices, customer is free to choose whether to stay or not with DallesGo.
- Buyer information availability: customers tend to be attracted by the company offering the most appropriate amount of information. In this respect DallesGo keeps in touch with its customers through continuous communication and posts on its official page, on the facebook page and on its blog.
- Force down prices: customers have the power to influence the prices through their decision to buy or not a certain product or service.

- Availability of existing substitute services: customers can be easily attracted by substitute services at lower prices. This is not the case for DallesGo as consequence of its accessible price and of the attracting mix of offerings.
- Buyer price sensitivity: any change in the price of the courses has a certain effect on customers, as well as a constant high price.
- Differential advantage (uniqueness) of industry services: DallesGo is a unique platform of this type of courses and this attracts a high number of customers, as well as keeping the old ones.

4. Bargaining power of suppliers

Factors that affect the suppliers' effect over the company:

- Supplier switching costs relative to firm switching costs
- Degree of differentiation of inputs
- Impact of inputs on cost or differentiation
- Presence of substitute inputs
- Strength of distribution channel
- Employee solidarity (e.g. labour unions)
- Supplier competition: the ability to forward vertically integrate and cut out the buyer.

5. Intensity of competitive rivalry

Factors that affect the competitive rivalry's effects over the company:

- Sustainable competitive advantage through innovation: in this sense, DallesGo brings together a set of interactive and creative courses, famous people in the industry and collaborations with a great impact on the market.
- Level of advertising expense: the company brings an important investment in the promotion campaign, focusing on acquiring the appropriate segment of customers.
- Powerful competitive strategy: is given by the continuous development of the company's strategy and image.
- Degree of transparency: the company wants to approach its potential customers through the "Open days" event, organized especially to focus on the idea of transparency.

3.5. CRM instruments used by DallesGo

The organization benefits from fidelity cards from their partners meaning that students who undertake the make-up class have a 30% discount when purchasing partners' make-up products: MAC, Inglot, Bourjois.

DallesGo uses newsletters to advertise their price promotions and offers for applications in certain time intervals. They also advertise special events they organise with their students such as fashion shows, make-up demonstrations in malls, the open days' period when people can visit DallesGo studios to have a better insight in all what DallesGo represents.

Figure 32.DallesGo newsletter
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

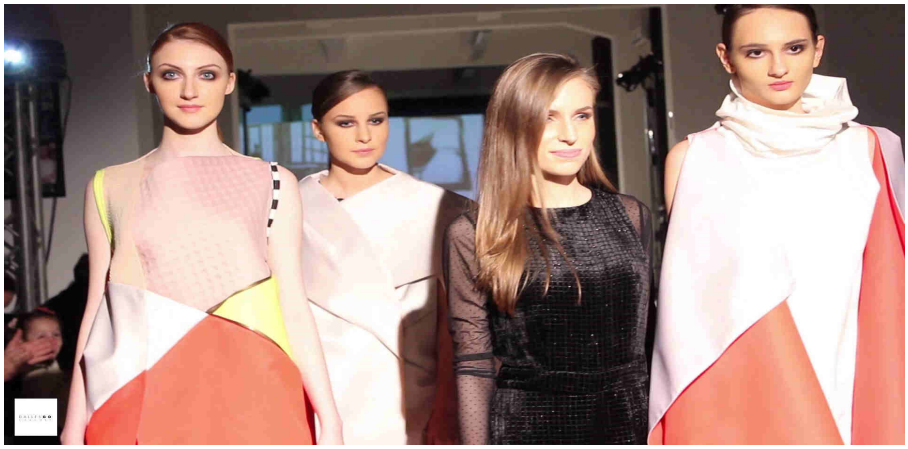


Figure 33.Fashion Show by DallesGo
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

The company is specialized in online marketing and it has a well-developed online strategy represented by its official page which offers their clients and students all the necessary information about the company and its services, by the facebook page through which the company keeps a permanent contact with students and potential clients by updating the information and posting new and interesting materials about the courses and the events organized by students and their teachers.

The official webpage is backed by the brands that endorse the company and its activity as well as by some of the celebrities who represent the image of the company.

Figure 34.Editorials endorsements

Source: www.dallesgo.ro

Moreover, the official blog has a great advertising potential because it is represented by attracting articles regarding the courses activities but also regarding the teachers' accomplishments and latest events.

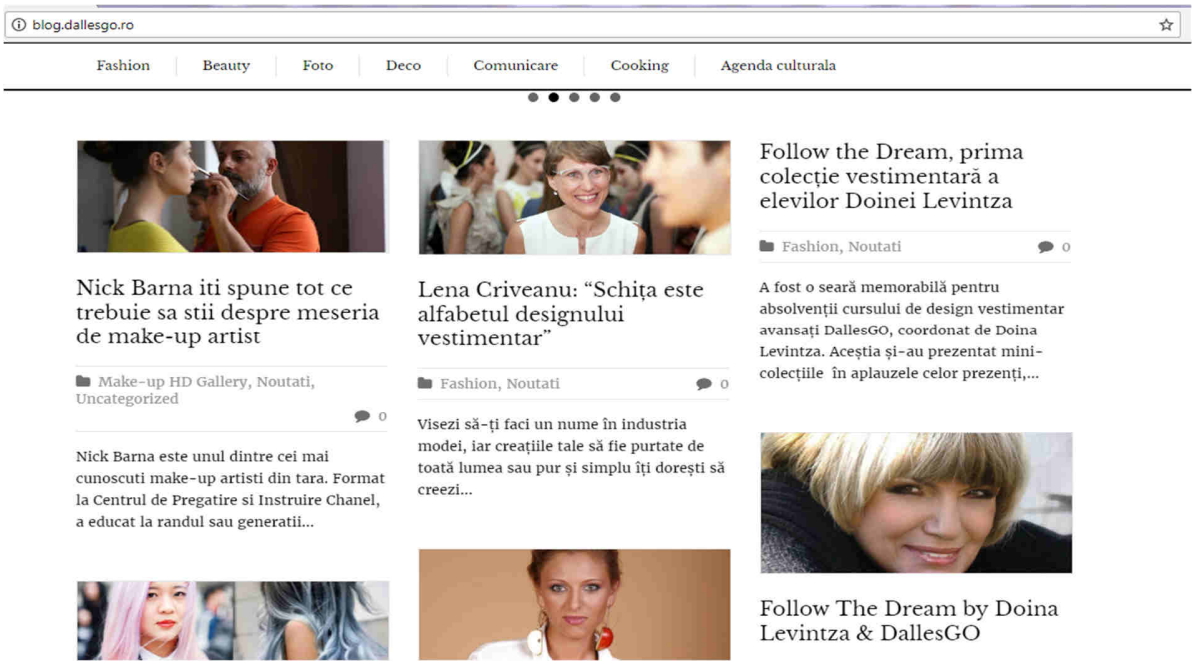


Figure 35.Blog news

Source: blog.dallesgo.ro

DallesGo invests time and effort in event-marketing as well especially when advertising its services. Thus, the company tries to organize fashion events, make-up events as well as PR and fashion design workshops to give people the opportunity to understand better how the classes work and what the result is.

Figure 36.A clothing story
Source: blog.dallesgo.ro

As an example, there is the special publication prepared by the company as a consequence of a national fashion show which was outlining the ancestral national clothing habits.

The event was hosted by the art museum "Galateca" and it was attended by important figures on the fashion scene from the capital, Bucharest.

The price policy offers customers great opportunities and discounts. For instance, each student who brings another person to apply for any of the courses has a 20% discount for the chosen course. Moreover, there are some time intervals during which customers receive 10%, 15% or even 25% discount at their application. Also, students who undertake the make-up class have a 30% discount for purchases in partners' make-up stores such as MAC or Make-up Forever.

The last price policy that they applied for a determined time period was paying one course and receive an extra one at choice for free.

Figure 37.New price policy
Source: blog.dallesgo.ro

4. Chapter IV – Brand endorsement effects on DallesGo

In its early evolution on the market, DallesGo was introducing itself as an interactive platform which was teaching after-work alternative courses mainly for people who were sharing a passion but never the courage of undertaking a career in the respective direction.

The company entered the market with 4 main courses:

- Make-up,
- Photography,
- Interior design,
- Fashion styling.

And it applied some smart strategies to introduce properly the brand:

* The main focus was not brand endorsement at the beginning, thus the "vampire effect" did not threaten to be a problem for the recognition of the brand.
* It attracted the customers with their coloured, stylish marketing campaign and with the effort of making it reach as many people as possible.

Figure 38.First campaign pictures
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

* They endorsed the brand with professionals, not necessarily with celebrities, people who were the best in their domain and has recognition on the market but in a more specific sense, in a narrower circle of people.
* The endorsers match perfectly the endorsed product, they are coming from the specialized domain of activity, representing exactly what the company is selling.

Figure 39.Endorsement technique
Source: www.google.ro

* The collaboration between the brand and its endorsers is a historical partnership, which strengthens over time, this is why the endorsement effect becomes even more powerful.

Figure 40.Photography course teacher
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

Since the first moment of launching the brand, Ionut Staicu has been partner of the company and professor teaching the photography course. As a consequence, 57% of the interviewed students admit that they trusted the course due to this long-term collaboration and thanks to Ionut' work in DallesGo which they could check in the weekly posts related to his course.

Figure 41.PR course teacher
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

The same happens with Ioana Manoiu who remained a constant partner and for this reason she is trustworthy and students continue applying for her courses.

What is very important is that big percentages of students continue applying again for courses in the superior levels or even for other courses not related with the one they had done already previously.

* They based their endorsement strategy on a cognitive and affective approach, trying to give credibility to the brand trough the qualities of the involved professors.

For example, **Diana Ionescu** is one of the best-known makeup artists in the country, having important collaboration with big make-up brands (MAC, Melqior, Bourjois) and with important fashion publications (Vogue, Elle, Glamour). All these names were endorsing DallesGo through her image. As she was not a very mediated figure, she was not affecting the impact of the brand at the first contact with the client, it was increasing its importance, making it grow bigger in the eye of the potential client.

On the other side, **Ovidiu Buta** is a remarkable fashion specialist, with national and international recognition. Even if the brand was at the beginning of its evolution, this collaboration did not have a negative effect, but it increased the impact of its image, contrary to what specialists sustain. The "brand vampire" effect did not occur in this case either, but convinced people to apply, as 72% of his students admit. The other 28 say that the description of the course and the spread marketing campaign had a very important influence on their decision.

Later on, as it was introducing new courses and new figures in the scene, DallesGo continued with the same strategy of focusing its endorsing policies towards trustworthy professionals, people who were very recognized at national level but by a narrow public, the specialized or very interested public in that specific field.

Figure 42. Social Media course
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

However, meanwhile the brand was evolving, the specific events held in the academy in the presence of famous artists were highly mediated: photo shootings, special make-up editions, hair style editions or even fashion shows in different cultural locations with the support from the best known magazines at international level.

Figure 43. DallesGo fashion show
Source: www.google.ro

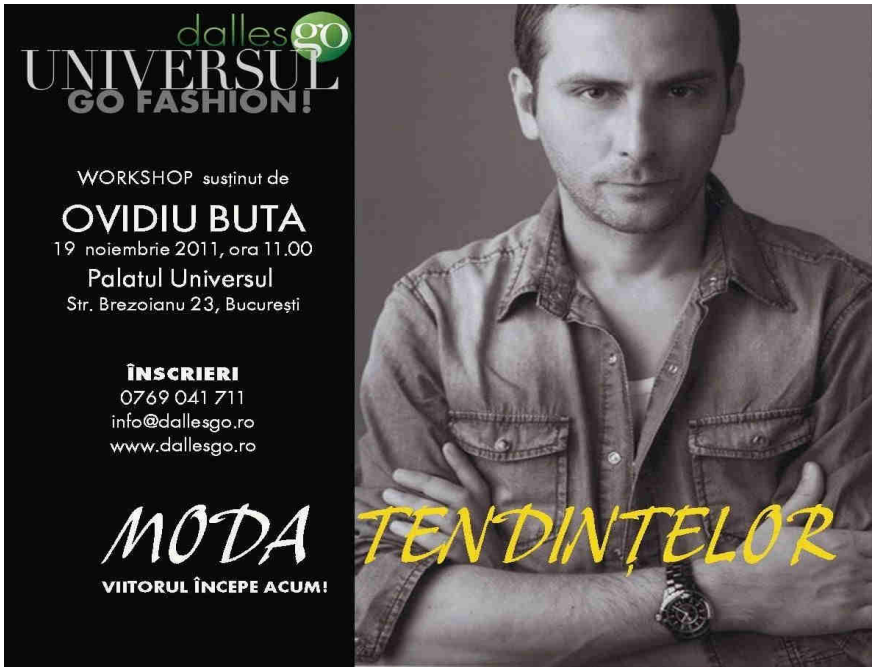


Figure 44.DallesGo fashion workshop
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

Figure 45.Open days event
Source: www.google.ro

According to 43% of the interviewed students, the events and personalities that the brand was associating convinced them to apply the courses of make-up, fashion style, hair style and photography.

Later on DallesGo, already an easily recognizable brand on the market, introduced the cooking and the mindfulness courses. The names do not say too much, as everyone knows that cooking is a special art which needs to be studied in a specialized academy and mindfulness is an abstract term that people do not understand at first sight.

This is why, DallesGo applied maybe the strongest point of its campaigns ever: collaboration with Italian chef **Patrizzia Paglieri** and with the news host **Andreea Raicu** who are very appreciated figures, the first one in the cooking environment and the second one on the television scene.

Figure 46.Famous DallesGo brand endorsers
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

This strategy had very clear purposes - affective and behavioural- they wanted to transmit the confidence that the courses are worth and that everyone must have the courage to chose DallesGo in the favour of any other specialized school because the best teachers and quality were here.

The impact was amazing: 82% of the interviewed people said that they chose the mindfulness course to have the chance to meet Andreea Raicu and to learn something from her.

Regarding the cooking course, 63% said that they were convinced by the teacher, while the remaining 37% said that they were attracted by the Italian cuisine.

A very important step for the company was the launching of the fashion design course endorsed by highly reputed designer in Romania, **Lena Criveanu**. This collaboration brought a new wave of students thanks to the values and qualities inspired to the brand. Again, DallesGo applied the affective marketing endorsement and became, through Lena Criveanu, all that she represents.

72% of the students were inspired by Lena's presence at the courses who was a truly inspiration and passion for her students.

Figure 47.Lena Criveanu at DallesGo
Source: www.dallesgo.ro

As a conclusion of the findings, DallesGo brand enjoyed positive effects after the implementation of the celebrity endorsements.

Unlike the specialists' findings, DallesGo found support in this technique and not a disadvantage, the benefits could be seen in the numerical data resulted from the concluded interviews among the students.

Aras per the manager's report, the number of students choosing the courses endorsed by a stronger endorser in terms of public recognition was always higher than the number of students choosing a lower endorsed brand.

And very important, the courses attended by men teachers were more popular than the courses attended by women teachers (in the case of make-up course for example which was attended by two teachers – man and women – various times per week.

5. Conclusions

Universul DallesGo is a company which seeks for performance and internal development. In order to reach quality and to assure commitment, the manager knows that he has first to base the entire business on a strong internal structure, based on correct, healthy and transparent principles and on tough regulations to be complied with as internal standards. This way he will know for sure that customers will receive the final product in the expected shape.

For this reason, the business is organized thorough the involvement of quality people, with high level of professional preparation in their field of activities. In this respect, relevant examples can be represented by Patrizzia Paglieri, Italian cooking chef and public figure with great recognition in the field.

Moreover, Ovidiu Buta is a trustworthy personality in the fashion styling business and together with Lena Criveanu, a representative figure for the contemporary fashion design industry they are image of quality and commitment for Universul DallesGo reputation.

Last but not least, Andreea Raicu who has become the brand ambassador of the organization in 2014 reassures clients once more that DallesGo is a choice for performance and a support for people's passions.

However, apart from the iconic figures that have associated their names and careers with DallesGo, there is a great involvement and investment in the quality of the provided materials at the courses.

The students benefit from the most qualitative equipment and materials in the photography class for instance, the best-known make-up products in the make-up class from well-known brands on the market such as MAC and Make-up Forever as well as impressive brands and materials for the fashion design and styling courses such as Zara, New Look, Bershka, Mango.

Moreover, DallesGo implements various customer relationship techniques and tools in the field of communication with customers. Their online implication consists of well-developed websites and pages such as the official DallesGo site and the facebook page as well as the blog of the organization. This way the company establishes a permanent relationship with students and potential clients, offering them updated information and interesting posts which give an insight of all the activities performed during classes and not only.

Therefore, Universul DallesGo invests time and effort in the online communication because it is cheaper and at the same time it is effective. However, a great financial effort is done regarding the marketing campaigns that the organization conducts twice a year. The advertizing materials consist of flyers of a superior quality spread all over Bucharest, targeting a certain typology of people: corporate employees, with economic possibilities and who share the same passions and dedication for a certain domain. The marketing campaigns are a great factor of influence together with the brand endorsement technique that DallesGo has applied since the first moment it appeared on the market.

Even if 61% of the interviewed people agree that brand endorsement and marketing are the most important factors when choosing between competitor brands or products, the other 39% sustain that brand endorsement loses trust whenever customers' expectations are not fulfilled.

However there have been identified some problems that the company should overcome in order to expand their pool of customers:

1. Price considerations

According to the Romanian economy, the prices of the courses reach a high level, thus this aspect is an obstacle for some of the customers who are eager to follow them up but they miss the financial means. For instance, there is a great number of students being optimistic about attending these courses but who cannot really pay the entire amount of money.

As seen during the research activity many people make calls or come to the office in order to find out more details about the courses. They have a passion and they want to transform it into a profession. When they reach the subject related to the price, they make-up their mind and decide that this is a huge investment that they are not ready for. And the majority of them are still students, young minds filled with ideas and creativity. And if they do not have the means to feed their passion, it fades away slowly.

2. Demographic considerations

Another important problem that I identified is the one related to the demographic aspect according to which the targeted age segment lies somewhere in between 28-45 years. Again, the young sector is put aside, without even trying to find a solution in order to explore young students' potential.

3. Mothers with children are considered inappropriate

Another problem is related to mothers having little children who are considered too busy to make time for after-work courses. It is not completely true, as many women mothers are students of DallesGo classes even if the focus was not on them. Therefore, it means that they are a resource which should be taken into consideration.

4. Quality issues

Brand endorsement is a technique that transmits a certain level of security to people – the security that quality is above the standard. However, there have been times when quality was not at its highest pick: the most common problem is the lack of models during the courses where models are the main work instrument.

For example: every make-up class is done on models, each student must have a model to work on and the model is guaranteed by the company in the contractual terms. However, there have been plenty of uncomfortable moments when students could not perform their activity because of a lack in models. And the respective classes can be considered wasted for them.

The same happens in the case of fashion styling, hair styling and fashion design courses and even in the course of photography, where there have been various situations when the company failed in respecting this term.

On the other side, there have been situation in which the company provides too many models and the ones who are not selected for the course just lose their time coming until there and are unresponsive the next times when they are called to attend other course.

This may be the strongest issue that I analyzed in the company until now and I consider that is a big issue. Students become frustrated and independently of the fact that they are thought by important and well-known specialists, they lose confidence and respect for the courses.

And this might severely affect the image of the company and the profit after all because people can refuse applying. And a solution must be found.

6. Solutions and recommendations

1. One solution for the first identified problem would be to offer students a specific discount or a special voucher according to his or her university performance. This is a way of supporting education while creating the perfect conditions for the student to follow his passion.

   Moreover, another solution should be seen as equity. The student could be given the possibility to compensate a certain percentage of the course price trough some specific activities, such as participating at the promotion campaign as a promoter, working at the office or participating in further collaborations.

   The idea is that students have a great potential which has to be carefully explored in order to bring as many positive results as possible.

2. Concerning the second problem, I consider that the company should also focus on other age segments, with their specific requirements and characteristics. For instance, the idea of establishing after-school courses for kids could create a new trend and it could bring competitive advantage for the business.

   Besides, kids need to be motivated to find their passion and to take great care of their talent. The most important is to know where from to start and this type of course could be the hand that parents need these days when it comes to their children's education and potential.

3. For the third situation, I would suggest insisting on mothers with little children because they need some relaxing moments after a long week of work. And this perspective can relate perfectly with the above-mentioned idea, of a after-school course or, why not, even a specific program of special care inside the company for parents who come with kids.

4. Regarding the issue related to the lack of models, the answer is simple: the models are not motivated, there are no incentives, the models are promised a special photo shooting after a thematic make-up session and they are glad to come. However, when their rights are disrespected, of course they give up coming the next time.

   The solution is obvious: concluding a collaboration contract based on some incentives – money or products – or offering them some benefits in the company – free classes in their domain of interest. They may be seen as a cost for the company, but in fact they are an asset that DallesGo should take care of, this condition is part of its customers' satisfaction.
   Lose a client is more expensive than acquiring a new one.

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