

ETHICAL ADVERTISING FOR A POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACT

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ABSTRACT

Technology, science, almost every human activity is (can be) dangerous without ethics. This is especially true for advertising, which has an impact on a large number of people, on their physical and mental health, and on the environment. Ethical advertising is advertising that has a positive impact on people, with the least harm to the environment. There is no ethical advertising without ethical business. Ethical business is a socially responsible business; a business that is responsible to society. The article presents the definition, principles, and methods of ethical advertising, including digital marketing and self-promotion tools with four examples of ethical projects from the author's practice; (1) the #Buy responsibly campaign, (2) TOTI DCA daily activity center for the elderly people, (3) the project "Maribor, the European Capital of Social Economy" and (4) the environmental cleaning campaign Let's Clean Slovenia in One Day. It also presents two emerging opportunities for international cooperation: (1) Buy Social and (2) the Balkan School of Social Economy within the European Business School of Social Economy. Ethical advertising of presented ethical projects had a positive social and environmental impact.

Keywords: ethics, ethical advertising, ethical business, (positive) social impact, social responsibility.

INTRODUCTION

Why this article? Technology, science, almost every human activity is (can be) dangerous without ethics. Especially the advertising has a huge impact on a large number of people, on their physical and mental health and on the environment. A bigger impact means bigger responsibility. Because of its huge impact on people and nature, (ethical) advertising is very important.

Ethics is urgently needed in all areas of human society. Ethical business is the most important value for the development of a more ethical society. More ethical society is the goal of all ethical, social responsible, and social economy enterprises and organizations, therefore they act interdependently.

In this article, we explained shortly the definitions of keywords, introduce three case studies of ethical advertising with positive social impact, and two possibilities for international cooperation: Buy Responsible campaign and Balkan School of Social Economy within the European Business School of Social Economy. They all are connected with ethical, social responsible, and social economy. They all have in common that they address almost all the goals of the sustainable development of the United Nations. And that is, what we call social impact. Ethical advertising promotes them all.

MATERIALS AND METHODS OF WORK USED

We used materials from author's practice and from sources, stated in Literature chapter at the end of this work.

We described the definitions using the description method. We used the method of analysis to examine 3 examples of advertising from the author's practice.

CONCEPTS DISCUSSED AND SUGGESTIONS OF ADDITIONS

Ethics

„Ethics“ in old Greek meant „a neutral debate about good and evil“ (Wikipedia, 2021). Zarathustra 3000 years ago said: "Purity of intention, wisdom and good deeds«. Today ethics

advocates universal values such as honesty, truthfulness, reliability, respect for others, justice, moderation, wisdom, and prudence. Ethics involves learning what is right or wrong, and then doing the right thing - but "the right thing" is not nearly as straightforward as conveyed (Krishnamurthy, 2011). The main challenge in today's society is the ethical dilemma: What is ethical for who? It depends on culture (social customs and norms), education, environment, personal level of consciousness. How do I influence other people with my personal and professional activities? Is my impact positive? How do I affect health, values, well-being, happiness, culture, upbringing?

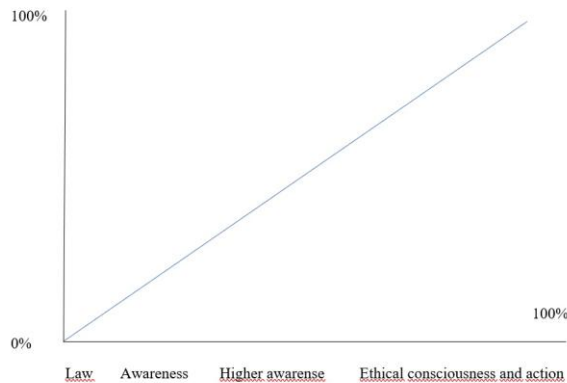


Figure 1: Levels of ethical awareness and action.

Ethical Business and Social Responsibility

It is the personal responsibility of the owner, management, and all employees in the organization to act honestly - ethically. They are a winning combination for all stakeholders in a business relationship. It means a job in which all actors in the business process win -win in a fair and ethical way. Who are the actors? Employees, partners, suppliers, distributors, customers, environment, and the next generations (Mulej, & Mulej, 2019).

Ethical action, as well as business, is part of social responsibility according to the ISO 26000 (2010) standard, and as responsibility towards society (Mulej, & Mulej, 2019);



Figure 2: Components of the Social Responsibility (ISO 26000, 2010).

Kaufmann Entrepreneurs defines ethical Business as – respect, honor, integrity, customer focus, results-oriented, risk-taking, passion and persistence (Matthews, 2002).

Social impact

Social impact is the impact of an organization on the environment that surrounds it (Buid Aboard, 2021). Social impact could be health, inclusion, socialization, personal values.

Ethical, socially responsible and social enterprises

Common points of ethical, socially responsible and social economy are: They represent ethical values horizontally in all sectors of the economy. They meet almost all the goals of sustainable development of the United Nations 2030.

Ethical advertising

There is almost no definition of what ethical advertising is. It is advertising that has a positive effect on people, with the least damage to the natural environment - it has a positive social impact. Is the promotion of products, services and projects in the field of health, these are clean technologies, bio food, eco cleaners, eco cosmetics, eco tourism... It is a socially responsible business; a job that is responsible to society.

There is no ethical advertising without ethical business and ethical attitude and mindset.

Ethical advertisement is clear about its intentions and refrains from messages that have hidden agendas (Singh, 2020).

CASE STUDIES: THREE EXAMPLES OF ETHICAL ADVERTISING

We introduce in this article three examples of ethical projects (case studies) from the author's practice, and their ethical advertising: Center of daily activities for the elderly TOTI DCA Maribor, a project "Maribor, European Capital of Social Economy" and a cleaning campaign called „Let's clean Slovenia in one day“.

Case study No. 1: Center of daily activities for the elderly TOTI DCA Maribor

Association Daily Activity Center for the Elderly TOTI DCA in a social enterprise. It has almost 400 users at 2 locations in Maribor City, Slovenia. TOTI DCA is a good example of cooperation between institutions (financed by the municipality), non-governmental organizations (connecting 17 companies in the intergenerational center), and social entrepreneurship. It is the seat of the Association of the Social Economy of Slovenia with almost 50 member organizations. It has also the status of associations in the public interest.

TOTI DCA has the status of a voluntary organization: approximately 40 volunteer leaders carry out 30 different activities for the elderly: handicrafts, foreign languages, literary, photography, painting workshops, hiking, yoga, recreation, excursions, board games, cooking (Holc, 2020).

Association Daily Activity Center for the Elderly TOTI DCA has an extremely high social impact, especially on the health of the elderly through the strengthening of the psychophysical condition, independence, socialization, and intergenerational influences.

Case study No. 2: Project „Maribor, European Capital of the Social Economy

The umbrella organization of Social Economy in Slovenia is called Association Social Economy Slovenia (ASES) and was established in 2011, the same year Slovenia got the law on social economy.

Social economy is ethical, solidarity and social responsible economy, that produces social impact and place it before economic impact. It solves many social challenges in an economic way.

In 2017 ASES organized the first biggest regional Conference called "Scaling up social economy enterprises in southeast Europe" and accepted the Ljubljana declaration to boost and promote the social economy in south-east Europe.

In 2018 Slovenia presided over the Luxembourg committee on social economy and Maribor city became a European Capital of the Social Economy. That year ASES organized a Forum on Social Economy in EU Regions called "Creating the future of Europe together", and also another international conference called „Boosting the Social Economy in South-East Europe“. Activities of

the project were also presented activities of the project Maribor, the European capital of the social economy in Serbia, in Faculty of Economics in Niš. At the end of the project, also guidelines for the selection of the European Capitals of Social Economy were made and presented to the next European Capital of the Social Economy, which was Strasbourg (Mihec, 2018; Mihec, 2018a).

The effect of spreading social impact in this project was bigger internationally than in Slovenia. ASES organized a total of more than 50 events in Slovenia, 10 events abroad, involve more than 450 individuals, and addressed more than 350 companies (Mihec, 2019). The most important project were: promotion of the social economy in Slovenia, promotion of the blockchain technologies, setting the rules and tools to future european capitals of social economy, an project for involvement of precarious workers and „Buy responsible“ campaigning.

Case study No. 3: „Let's clean Slovenia in one day“ projekt

Project „Let's clean Slovenia in one day“ is certainly the biggest cleaning action and awareness raising campaign in the history of Slovenia. This is an example of the biggest social impact in Slovenia, especially environmental impact.

Nonprofit association called „Ecologists without borders“ mobilized Slovenia first in 2010.

In this cleaning action 270,000 volunteers (13% of Slovenia's population) were involved. This number increased to 290,000 volunteers (14% of Slovenia's population) in 2012 (Ekologi brez meja, 2010). In 2010 all 212 municipalities in Slovenia participated and 20,000 tons of wildly dumped waste were collected. The project created a list of 115,000 illegal landfills, which is 100,000 m³ of waste.

The project „Let's clean Slovenia in one day“ is still an excellent example of ethical advertising: cleaning action was promoted on almost all Slovenian television programs, radio programs, cinemas, outdoor media, on the internet, newspapers, magazines. The association „Ecologists without borders“ also organized a huge number of entertaining and awareness-raising events, like fashion shows, bus trips, musical concerts, etc.

The project was organized like a successful and big commercial company. The campaign got almost 200.000€ in different forms like cash, advertising space, materials from different sponsors, and from voluntary work. The work was organised by departments: logistics, organization, finance, communication, marketing, advertising.

President of Republic of Slovenia Mr. Danilo Turk awarded the Order of Merit to the Association of Ecologists without Borders for the implementation of the first project „Let's clean Slovenia in one day.“

TWO POSSIBILITIES FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

In this article we introduce also two possibilities for international cooperation: Buy Responsible campaign and Balkan School of Social Economy within the European Business School of Social Economy.

Buy Responsible campaign

Brand #Buy Responsible means: buying locally, buying organic (no certificate required, but ethical conscience is); buying without plastic packaging; buying from ethical, and socially responsible people, sellers, and manufacturers; buying without a negative impact on life, environment, and society; buying products without experiments on animals, without palm oil, and without genetically modified organisms.

The COVID crisis has reminded us of an old-new value - health. Buy Responsible Campaign is an awareness-raising campaign on responsible consumerism. Buying responsibly means buying healthy local food and other natural products to strengthen the body's resistance. There are already three zero-waste stores in Slovenia using brand Buy Responsible. Cannabis oil producer Kooperativne Konopke uses logo Buy responsible for the packaging of its product. Also, Cooperative Ladies use the logo in its restoran with healthy local food.

The model Buy responsible is transferable internationally to almost every local community, while almost every person is a buyer too. The added value is certainly high social impact on the good health of the people and also positive environmental impact.

Balkan School of Social Economy within the European Business School of Social Economy.

Emerging European School of Business Economics (EBSSE) is the project of **S3 Industrial Modernisation partnership on Social Economy**. The partners are the European regions Navarra and Murcia from Spain, Emilia-Romagna from Italy, Orebro from Sweden, Lapland from Finland and Slovenia. Slovenian partners are Association Social Economy Slovenia, Etika d.o.o. (Ethics Ltd.), The Regional Development Agency for Podravje - Maribor, IRDO Institute for the development of the Social Responsibility, *School of Economics Celje, Vocational College, Municipality of Maribor, Pupillam, and TOTI DCA*.

The main objectives of the EBSSE are: to develop social economy clusters; to create European value chains of social economy enterprises belonging to different European regions and to improve cooperation between companies and actors with technological and innovative capabilities. The EBSSE is also creating a digital platform for education and cooperation. The legal form is planned to be a private cooperative.



Figure 3: Balkan School of Social Economy within the European Business School of Social Economy.

Even before the beginning of the European Business School of Social Economy project, ASES teamed up with some social economy actors in the Western Balkans: Faculty of Economics Niš from Serbia, UpBeat Hub from Monter Negro, Public from North Macedonia, and with School of Economics Celje, Vocational College from Slovenia. School of Economics Celje, Vocational College, and Association Social Economy Slovenia has developed a study program for advanced training in the field of higher professional education (SQF 6): qualification „Expert on social economy“ is specialization after 2 years of vocational college on the economy.

Both Balkan School of Social Economy within the European Business School of Social Economy are in the phase of emerging and therefore open to new partners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research on ethical advertising show that ethical advertising as an expression does not receive a larger number of definitions. The terms „advertising ethics“ and „business ethics“ are used more frequently. Here is an opportunity for in-depth research into the importance of ethical advertising.

Ethical dilemmas arise as to what is ethical for whom. Personal ethics largely depends on social norms and culture. Thus, there can be great differences between nations in the field of ethical action. Values are different and ethics is the result of the evaluation. The question also arises as to whether ethical advertising is possible at all. We firmly believe that all activities of a

company should be ethical, from healthcare, education, and science to business and advertising. Ethical advertising is one step towards a more ethical society.

CONCLUSIONS

Ethical advertising with a positive social impact is closely linked to ethical, socially responsible, and social economy. All these activities are connected by the desire to create a social impact and giving priority to create social impact over economic impact, which is of course also important for the survival and development of the organization.

Due to common values, ethical advertising is easier to implement in ethical, socially responsible, and social enterprises and organizations.

As consumers become more aware, they become more and more aware, so ethical advertising is gaining in importance.

Ethical advertising is a promotion of ecology and health, which is becoming urgently needed in today's time of lack of values.

Ethical advertising is the future of advertising and it holds a lot of opportunities for development and cooperation.

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