

The Role of Direct Marketing in Relation with the Consumers in Kosovo

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Abstract

Direct marketing is very important in creating good relations with clients for the presentation of new products/services, and to also achieve sales in the meantime. Direct marketing uses different techniques, such as e-mails, telephones, fairs, festivals and other techniques in order to directly communicate with clients by being very flexible, and it also allows immediate feedback. This paper consists of two parts: the first part is related to the review of literature regarding direct marketing, and the second part is related to the research conducted through surveys in companies, by interviewing the director, general manager, marketing manager and managers of other departments within the company who have knowledge about the marketing in the company. The study regarding direct marketing and its role in relation with consumers is an interesting field to study, but at the same time it is also a challenge, because knowing more about one technique or another is a field on its own and requires the analysis of particular specifics of each technique in order for the direct marketing to have a positive impact in creating good relations with the clients on the basis of fulfilling their needs and requests.

Key Words: Direct Marketing, Client, and Fairs

www.dx.doi.org/10.21113/iir.v6i1.223

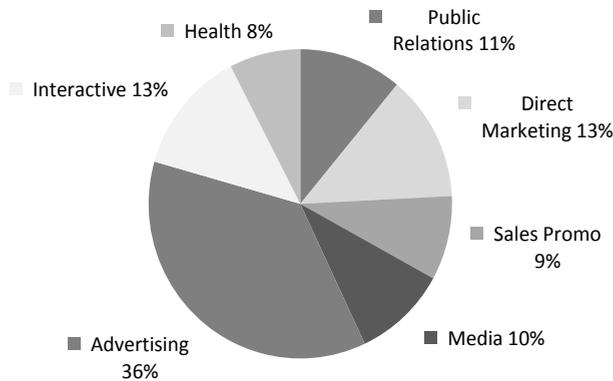
ILIRIA International Review – Vol 6, No 1 (2016)

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1. Literature Review

Direct marketing tries to gain and keep the clients by contacting them without mediators. Thus, direct marketing is the distribution of products, information and promotion by aiming interactive communication with the consumers (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009). The term “direct marketing” was first used in 1961. This was the idea of an American pioneer, Lester Wunderman. Direct marketing is the process where the individual answers the consumers (Baker, 2003). Direct marketing is a relative process, a process of trade, research, conversion and maintenance by using different means for sale and direct relation with the consumers. This definition entails four aspects: relational marketing, the process of research, conversion and maintenance, information and control in the individual level, and advertisements as a direct answer (Miglautsch and Bauer, 1992). Direct marketing is one of the methods that had a fast increase in the sectors of the American economy, through which organizations directly communicate with their clients. Direct marketing is much more than just a direct mail. It includes a number of activities, such as the managements of databases, direct sales, telemarketing and advertisements through direct mail, internet and many other instruments (Belch and Belch, 2003). Direct marketing has had an impact a long time ago as an integral part of marketing campaigns, but because of its high cost, only big companies were able to apply direct marketing. However, with the increase of internet users, and by using e-mail in the direct market for consumers, the companies have managed to decrease the cost and to increase the efficiency (Stokes, 2008). Direct marketing is not an event, but it is a very effective process of marketing that involves activities such as forecast analysis, compilation of lists, the creation and implementation of the important campaign for the audience, and the efforts for the fulfillment of the analytical marketing’s activities. Today, most of the leading companies in the world use direct marketing, and also most advertising agencies have a department for direct marketing (Sharma, 2009).

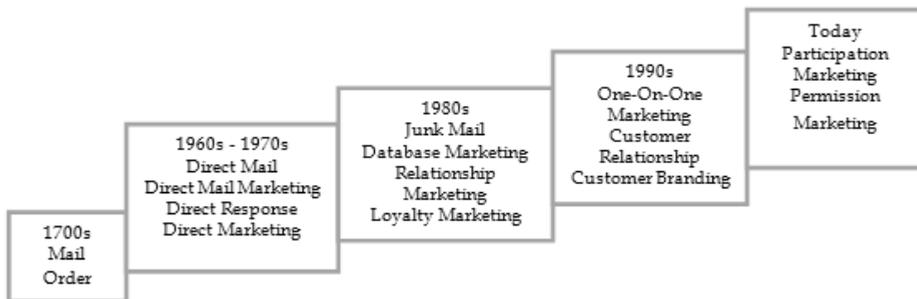
Figure 1: Allocation of all marketing dollars in 2006



Source: Sharma (2009).

The increase in the industry of direct marketing is continuing, and today we have facts that show this increase. Direct marketing is a practice of sending promotional messages directly to the consumers in individual basis and not based on a large extent (Mandapakaand, et.al., 2014).

Figure 2: The evolution of direct marketing



Source: Sharma (2009)

Direct marketing is the process in which the individual answers to consumers and the transactions are registered (Baker, 2003). Direct marketing is very opportunist, and we must have a plan and a clear

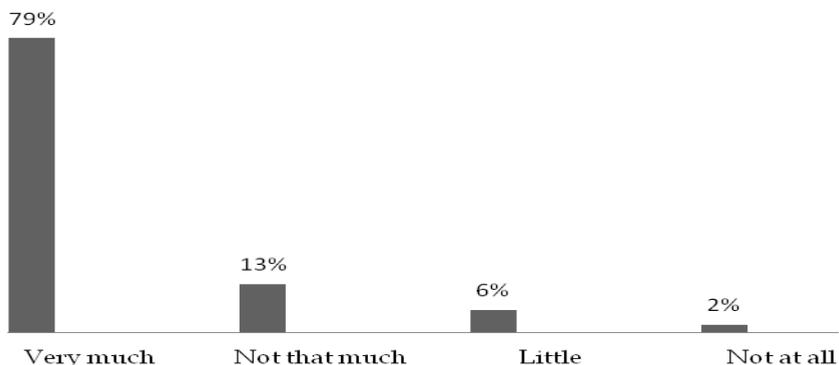
priority about where we are and where do we want to be. For example, here are three different opportunities from which we can benefit:

- Send a letter to your employees by offering them a special discount
- Write to your latest consumers by offering them the chance to enter in a Sweepstake by simply sending a catalogue (by knowing that the majority will think that they have a better chance to win if they buy something)
- If you are a manufacturer, develop a direct program with telephone or e-mail to present your products in new stores of retail sales, by developing close contacts with your existing clients that are important for the retail sale (Bird. 2000). Once we have a list of clients, suppliers and friends, we can call them on their telephones, send them a note or visit them in order to let them know more about the business. The duty of direct marketing is to improve this idea in order for us to contact with the people on our list and tell them about an event, activity, a product or service which will be welcomed by them (Phillips and Rasberry, 2001).

2. The Research Results

To realize this paper primary data was used, collected through questionnaires by questioning directly the managers, directors and owners that have a wide knowledge about their organizations.

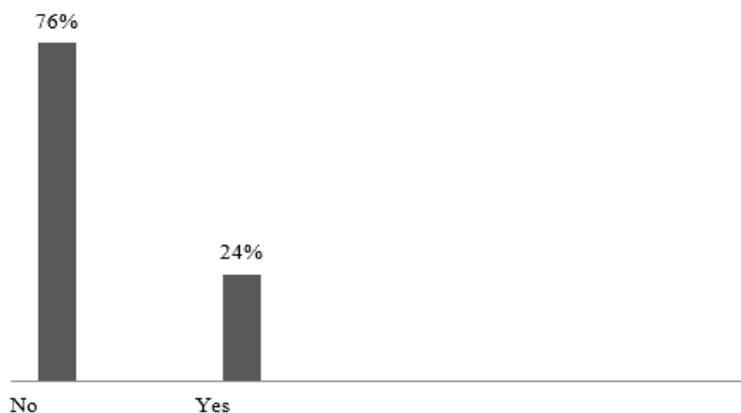
Figure 3: Does direct marketing help increasing the sales in your company?



Source: Calculations from the authors based on the research data

From the answers of the respondents we can see that direct marketing is important for companies, by helping in increasing the sales and in this way in increasing sales. 79% of the respondents said that direct marketing affects in increasing their sales very much, 13% said it doesn't affect it that much, 6% said that direct marketing has only a little impact in increasing sales and only a small percentage of 2% said that direct marketing is not related at all with increasing sales.

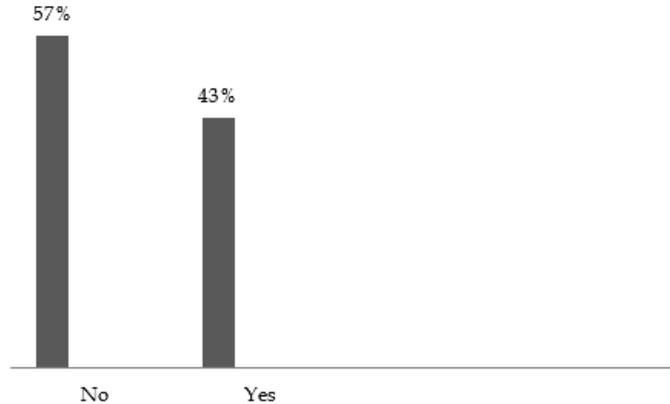
Figure 4: Do you develop direct contacts with clients through telephone and e-mail to present your products or services, by creating close contacts with the clients?



Source: Calculations from the authors based on the research data

Direct contacts through telephone and e-mail are very important in creating direct contacts with clients and in presenting new products by different companies. Based on the results we can see that companies don't develop direct contacts with their clients that much, where 24% said that they keep contact with their clients by telephone and e-mail, and most of the respondents, 76% of them said that they don't keep contacts by telephone or e-mail in order to increase the sales performance and create a new image for their clients.

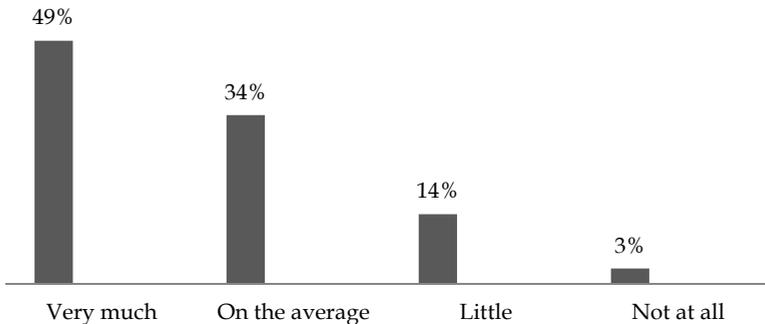
Figure 5: Have you been part of fairs and festivals to present your products/services in the last two years?



Source: Calculations from the authors based on the research data

43% of the respondents said that they have attended different fairs and festivals to present their products/services, and 57% said that they have not attended in fairs and festivals to present their products/services in the last two years.

Figure 6: If you have attended fairs and festivals, how much did they help for you to connect to your clients to present your products/services and to also increase the sales in the company?



Source: Calculations from the authors based on the research data

From the results, we can see that 49% of the respondents said that the attendance in fairs had very much impact in connecting with the clients to present the products/services, by also affecting the increase of sales, 34% of them said that the fairs and festivals had an average impact in connecting with clients and increasing sales, 14% said that they have only a little impact in connecting with the clients and increasing sales and 3% said that fairs and festivals have no impact in connecting with the clients and increasing sales at all.

3. Conclusions and Recommendations

Direct marketing keeps the consumers by creating direct contacts with them, by fulfilling the needs and requests of the consumers, and on this basis it increases sales. Direct marketing as one of the main forms of promotion is increasingly being used by companies, by increasing the performance of the companies. In the research it results that in the major number of companies, direct marketing has had an impact in increasing sales and companies develop direct contacts through telephone and e-mail, to present their products or services and to create close contacts with their clients.

What remains to be given a greater importance by companies is the low attendance in fairs and festivals in order to present their products and services, while the companies that attended more fairs and festivals agree that the attendance in fairs and festivals helped them to connect with clients and to present their products and services and in the meantime it increased the sales in the company.

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