

Chapter 8

Advertising Ethics in the Context of the Print Media Industry

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ABSTRACT

In this research, the authors discuss the mass media from the point of view of economic interest versus corporate social responsibility. The authors prepare a high-quality sociological comparison of the three most important Slovenian print journals from the point of view of articles that contain covert advertisements. The chapter indicates that it is more desirable for the media industries to make a profit than to be a socially responsible company. The results of this research provide insight into covert advertising in Slovenian daily newspapers and show several unique features that characterize an objective picture of a daily newspaper.

INTRODUCTION

Media are, in most countries, the primary source of information, and one of the more important creators of public opinion because of their power and influence. Meanwhile, media formed the environment that directs our everyday activities. There is no doubt that value, quality, and excellence are very important media concepts, and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a constituent part of all these dimensions.

It is very important to comprehend that the strategic mission of a company and its basic goals must not be viewed just from an economic point of view, but should also contain some quality humanistic values and recognizable ethical aspirations. Loyalty to the sole idea of profit maximizing can be a big problem, unless we succeed in defining it as only a strategic motive, and not the total goal of our existence. In order to attain this we should transform the internal organizational cultures of our companies.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-4117-3.ch008

According to Bivins (2004), profit is certainly a reasonable enough goal, but it should not be the only goal, especially given the opportunities we place on our media. Our opportunities, to a large degree, also shape the goals of the media. However, each communication has a crucial set of goals in common. Which of the sets is used at any given time depends on the medium and the principle to which the communication is being put. The more common of these goals are information dissemination, persuasion and entertainment. Each of these approaches, in the context of communication, can be used to support others, or can overlap with others. We can set an example by an advertisement being entirely informative, even though its fundamental goal may be to persuade. Entertainment can be used to present information or for a more convincing process. For example, in most public relations campaigns, communication with information is usually preceded by communication aimed at changing behaviors or attitudes. Furthermore, also, Tomkiewicz (2017), considers that, where business is concerned, the basic goal is to increase profits, but it should not be the only goal. Csigene Nagypál (2014) declared that ethical issues are usually more important than expected corporate benefits. According to Rojek-Adamek (2018), the broad opinion applies ethic as relatively close to social responsibility. Furthermore, Porter & Kramer (2006), argued that CSR stems from ethical incentives and business needs in a competitive business environment. On the other hand, Remisová et al. (2013) stated that Corporate Social Responsibility can be seen as a source of competitive advantage and opportunity, so they should not just be focused exclusively on financial results.

Given the rapid technological development, today, the mass media are an influential force in our daily lives. New Information Technologies are having a considerable impact on countries' economies. Compared to the pre-internet era, markets now operate in unique ways, and both companies and consumers behave in different ways. According to Howard (2011), the economy, especially in the developed world, has become both information-rich and networked. Porter & Kramer (2006) claim that the predominant approaches to CSR are extremely fragmented, and also separated from strategy and business, thus providing much greater occasions for companies to benefit society.

According to Zentes et al. (2017), contemporary society expects companies, inter alia media companies, to behave sustainably and responsibly. Such an approach has also influenced the progress of business ethics perceptions, such as CSR, as presented below, in the context of public administration, which is often characterized by rigidity and a conservative approach. But, according to Kovac and Jukic (2017), public administration, especially in Eastern Europe, has been reformed declaratively to comply with European Standards and trends.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility reports have been the subject of empirical research for many years. Namely, social responsibility is a business method that deals with how companies' actions and decisions influence society, and also considers the fact that companies have many other responsibilities in addition to economic and financial ones, namely ethical, philanthropic and legal responsibilities. Social responsibility is evaluated as a behavioral model related to a particular social situation or socio-economic status. The size, level of resources obtained (human resources in particular are important), the results obtained and their impact on market conditions play an important role in the socio-economic situation.

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