



## **THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ETHICS AND ETHICAL ASPECTS IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY**

**Dr. Sanjay Shrivastava**

Associate Professor (Business Communication),  
Technology Management Department,  
SVKM's NMIMS, MPSTME, Shirpur Campus,  
Shirpur, Dhule, Maharashtra, India

**Prof. Abhijeet Dawle**

Assistant Professor (Communication Skills),  
Technology Management Department,  
SVKM's NMIMS, MPSTME, Shirpur Campus,  
Shirpur, Dhule, Maharashtra, India

### **ABSTRACT**

*This present paper deals with the latest trends in marketing communication and their multifaceted applications into business. The rapidly growing significance of the Internet and the advent of technologies are now more accessible to consumers have given rise to new forms of marketing communication affecting consumers' decision-making process. The major factors responsible for dynamic changes marked as emerging trends can be denoted into the forms of globalization, technological progresses and the digitalization of marketing approaches. However, the most important aspect of latest trends in marketing communication approaches has also triggered ethical aspects of communication. Thus, the purpose of the present paper is to discuss the need of ensuring ethical aspects of marketing communication and its emerging trends to meet the latest businesses and customers' demands.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Communication, Marketing, Phase, Advertising, Business, Sales*

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Sasu (1998) explored that marketing communication ethical issues are much more frequent on the international marketing canvass. Ethics are basically set standards for implementation of an activity based on moral principles to be followed by individuals or group of people. Richards, the Chairman of University of Texas Advertising Department comments 'If it is not ethically, advertising won't be trusted. If consumer don't trust it, advertising is pointless'. This quotation explains an outline the moral significance of ethics in marketing communication. The basic objective of marketing communication is to percolate the information about the features, price and

availability of the products which customer every of and on. Communication is one of the most explicit function of entire marketing activity. It is very often that marketing communication strategies do attempt to ignite the passion for boosting materialism leading to consumer attitude, including stereotype and flaring up impulsive purchase and serving the concept through over emotional appeals that generally becomes difficult to digest by buyers. There are various ways that challenge the boundaries of ethical approach like taking advantage of children, manipulation of consumer behavior, sex appeal to sell including the participation to the degradation of values and morals.

## 2. SOCIAL ETHICS IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Discharge of social responsibility proves to be a vital reason to gain success in business. There are various reasons associated with social ethics like in cases where a particular product may not exist in the market or is forgotten but even in those cases if a company is continuously serving the social causes will be remembered for its social beefing attitude. Every organization should pay special attention to achieve social as well as commercial objectives. The positive activity may include empowerment of an employee, charity; sponsoring local activity and event, selling environment friendly products are effective ways of serving social responsibilities.

## 3. ADVERTISING ETHICS IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION

In a general study of advertising the ethical issues may broadly be divided into two parts. The major categories may be termed as the ethical dilemma and ethical lapses, where ethics does not remain an area of concerned. Special features in an advertisement may attract the attention of a large group of customers motivating them to purchase it through its successful communication. The large size advertisement obviously has more capacity of attraction when and if compared with small size advertisement. The appearance and layout of an advertisement, the use of creative and colors have stronger capacity to attract the attention of the users. Sometimes the advertisement are of very small size and the text part is largely split over it that it can cause dilemma in to the mind of reader whether they are observing an advisement or reading an article. In marketing communication it is observed that message recipients evaluate the motives of message communicators and infer reporting biases (Eagly, Wood, and Chaiken, 1978). Such biases and communicators in long term are evaluated as insincere in reporting manipulated versions of events. Such attributions of communicator insincerity and manipulation result in lower degrees of trust (Mills and Jellison, 1967). The ethical lapses majorly consist of unethical behavior that is violation or deviation of set standards deliberately to attend the attention. The communication experts of the company may already know that what they are serving crosses the boundaries of ethical standards but even then to gain splendid focus of the customer they do it.

## 4. UNETHICAL PRACTICES IN ADVERTISING

Unethical practices are most common in advertising and this is majorly done with the help of marketing communication tools leading to transforming and manipulating consumer's perception and consciousness. It is mostly used by organizations to create and send messages aiming at bringing perceptual

or behavioral changes in the nature of targeted customer and consumers. The effect and impact of any advertisement is always infinite since it is not only deliberately designed to deliver a specific message smartly rather in due course it is repeated for uncountable frequencies. The advertisements do have the potential messages being offered with credibility, and if the same is endorsed by a public figure or celebrity it is taken to be more trustworthy. The advertisement is the combined effect of enhanced expressivity with inclusion of various sorts of concepts, images, sounds, movements, colors and has always been a potential source of contact among product, company and large mass at different locations. Solomon (2006) emphasizes that advertising is often considered as a coercive force because it unavoidably interferes with the free choice of the consumer, due to advertising impact the customer most of the time could not decide by himself what he actually needs, but is exposed simultaneously to powerful influences that might be irrelevant event contrary to his needs.

The manipulated advertisements put deep influence on the autonomous thought process of an individual customer. Most of the time it is coercive, because it has the power to interfere with the free choice of the customer and consumer who are in the process of deciding what they actually need and what not. Of course, advertisement can cheat consumers when wrapped up affirmations are made or in the situation when half-information is presented in the advertising messages. However, advertising morally should not exploit the sales opportunities if the consumer does not have sufficient information. In most of such advertisements are referred and motivated to use products, hiding the dark facets of it or the side effects of it. The validity of the product should first of all be explicitly explained to the consumers. Advertisements are well strategized messages rather sharply woven pieces of psychology which may arouse artificial needs, infusing dissatisfaction towards pre utilized products. Above all, the one and most common feature of advertisements are the over exaggeration of the quality of product which generally leads to the shattered expectation of a buyer at a later stage after the products are used. The common ingredients of advertisements are using violence, pictures and scenes with sexual connotations, over highlighting of some unworthy human features or weaknesses. Ads sometimes violate intimacy if customers are asked to fill their personal details. It often rises to a level of consumer's irritation by the bombardment of commercials at a high broadcast frequency, exacerbating consumers' restlessness. The excessive use of sexual connotation normally results in protests from the society.

Advertising is such a conceptual device that it can easily manipulate either content or the way of its

presentation through the piece of communication. The ad-makers also utilize paralanguage including facial expressions, gesticulation, mimics, chronemics, haptics etc. to make the messages more vulnerable to get induced into the target customers. The special effect of the sounds also adds to the meaning of the advertisements through inclusion of special effects through it. However, all the latest technological art and artifice may easily manipulate to the meaning of the message as well as influence the understanding of the target customers.

Advertising keeps raising big issues of ethics at international platforms. Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Wong, V. & Saunders, J. (2008), Since continents and subcontinents are divided among various factors of cultural and language differences it keeps giving rise to ethical issues when the products are marketed through advertisements. The basic ingredients of advertisements are words, gestures, colors, symbols which most of the times have different significations at different countries of the world and further, are also interpreted differently. To operate advertisements in such circumstances, it is very likely to raise moral or ethical issues since if contents chosen for an advertisement are natural and honest or adequate in one country may be sensuous, ridiculous, obscene or dishonorable in another country intruding and insulting the modesty, pride and vanity of its masses. Not only this, plagiarism is also a big ethical issue in the creation of an advertisement. Sometimes, unwanted aspect in advertising work happens to be that ideas already used in some commercials, may be more or less discernible, difficult or easy to prove. Some advertising contents or overall ingredients may be conceptualized on some previously used ideas; such practices raise serious ethical issues in the advertising designing and creation activity.

## 5. ETHICS IN CHILDREN PSYCHE

As a common course, advertisements manipulating children, badly influencing their behavior, children being very vulnerable towards commercials; from this point of view, the Practice Code in Advertising in Romania plans that advertising must not suggest the fact that possessing or using a product will offer the child a physical or social advantage;

## 6. ETHICS IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

Another instrument utilized in marketing communication and a controversy field regarding the lack of ethics is represented by the public relations. The first ethical controversy regarding the public relations activity is tied to the validity of the positive images sold by PR. "A created image sells an impression and this impression is the result of public relation work" (Tabacu, 2008, p.12). The importance of following ethics in public relations has been emphasized in the

content of the International Ethics Code in Public Relations, adopted by the International Associations of Public Relations (IPRA) in 1965 and revised in 1968, code according to which, among other duties, the members of the associations must correctly inform, not subordinate the truth, induce the feeling of personal involvement and responsibility, take into consideration the interests of the implied parties (IPRA, 1965).

No matter the nature and the intensity with which they are used, the instruments that enhance marketing communication must be correspondingly utilized, and the transmitted messages must contain real information, this way corresponding to the expectations, demands and characteristics of the targeted public. Young, A., Aitken, L. (2007) The preoccupations regarding reaching and maintaining some high moral standards in marketing communication have led to the elaboration and improvement of some declarations and codes, including ethical regulations of the marketing communication either in its ensemble, or for each communication instrument separately. According to these codes, marketing professionals must develop their activity in conditions of correctitude and respect towards the public, responsibility and honesty, care and consideration towards people and environment. The organizations who initiate communicational approaches must take into consideration both their own reasons, regarding obtaining profit, the reasons of their public Baines, P., Fill, C., Page, K. (2008), respectively satisfying their consume necessities, as well as the general reasons of the society, regarding the assuring of the present and future wellbeing of its members.

## 7. CONCLUSION

Results, at multiple times have manifested that Ethical communication about goods and services is not only a legal matter, but also a determining factor for company's sales. Researches have proved that customer strongly prefer to be communicated the true information about products. According to the Advertising Educational Foundation, 80 percent of Americans feel better about purchasing from companies whose values align with their own. Of course, managing ethical practices in marketing communication can help companies avoid spreading confusing messages that may result steer away target market of a company. In fact, customers are sensitive to make a difference in the world of products, and using products from ethical companies is manifestation of the way to show they care. Thus, the moral significance of ethics will always play a deciding role for the future business of the companies.

## REFERENCES

1. Baines, P., Fill, C., Page, K. (2008) *Marketing: Case insight*. 1st Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 176.
2. Eagly, A. H., Wood, W., Chaiken, S. *Causal inferences about communicators and their effect on opinion change*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1978; 36: 424-435.
3. Kotler, P., Armstrong, G., Wong, V. & Saunders, J.(2008): *Principles of marketing*. Harlow: Pearson International Limited.
4. Mills, J., Jellison, J.M. *Effect on opinion change of how desirable the communication is to the audience the communicator addressed*. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 1967; 6: 98-101. Oxford University Press, 176.
5. Sasu, C. (1998), *International Marketing*, Iasi, Polirom Publishing House.
6. Solomon, R.C. (2006), *Ethics of Business Relations*, In Singer, P. (ed.), *Ethics Treaty*, pp. 385-395, Iasi, Polirom Publishing House
7. Tabacu, A. (2008), *Are the positive images sold by PR also valid?*, In *Campaign Magazine*, Romania, February/2008.
8. Young, A., Aitken, L. 2007. *Profitable Marketing Communications: A Guide to Marketing Return of Investment*. 1st Edition. Cornwall: MPG Books Ltd. 17