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ETHICAL MARKETING AS A STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

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The article examines the essence and significance of ethical marketing in the conditions of digital transformation of the economy and the growing role of socially responsible business. Special attention is paid to the principles of ethical marketing, its strategic importance for building consumer trust, strengthening brand reputation and ensuring long-term competitiveness of enterprises. An analysis of modern trends in the development of ethical marketing, digital tools for supporting ethical communications, as well as practical experience of implementing ethical principles in the activities of foreign and Ukrainian companies was carried out. The main problems and limitations of the development of ethical marketing in Ukraine are identified, in particular the formal nature of certain ethical initiatives, the insufficient level of regulatory support, low awareness of consumers and businesses, as well as the impact of economic and social challenges. Based on the identified trends and modern market requirements, directions for improving the mechanisms of implementing ethical marketing through increasing the transparency of business processes, the development of digital technologies, the formation of a culture of responsible consumption, and strengthening the social responsibility of enterprises have been substantiated. The proposed recommendations are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of marketing communications, strengthening trust in brands and ensuring sustainable business development. Theoretical positions and practical approaches to the use of ethical marketing as a strategic tool for the development of enterprises in the digital environment were further developed. In particular, the approach to the integration of digital technologies into the system of ethical marketing communications has been improved. Practical recommendations for using storytelling, video content, interactive digital campaigns, Big Data and transparency technologies to enhance the effectiveness of ethical marketing are offered.

Keywords: ethical marketing, social responsibility of business, digital technologies, transparency of communications, consumer trust, brand reputation, ethical standards, strategic development.

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Introduction and problem statement in general and its connection with important scientific or practical tasks

Modern consumers increasingly evaluate companies not only by product quality or service level, but also by business principles. In the conditions of increasing information openness, such characteristics

of enterprise activity as transparency, integrity and social responsibility acquire special importance. If earlier compliance with ethical norms was considered as an additional advantage, today it is turning into one of the key requirements of the market and an important factor in the formation of consumer trust. Under such conditions, ethical marketing becomes

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not only a tool for maintaining a positive image of the company, but also a source of its long-term competitive advantages.

The issues of development of marketing communications, corporate social responsibility and sustainable business development are widely considered in the scientific literature. Separate studies are devoted to the ethical aspects of the interaction of companies with consumers, the formation of brand reputation and the influence of digital technologies on marketing activities. At the same time, there is insufficient systematization of approaches to ethical marketing as a holistic concept that combines value-oriented communication, social responsibility, and modern digital tools. This problem becomes especially relevant in the conditions of digital transformation of the economy, when the role of transparency of business processes, personalized communications and rapid dissemination of information through digital channels is increasing. This necessitates rethinking approaches to marketing activities and finding effective tools for integrating ethical principles into the practice of enterprises.

Thus, the study of ethical marketing is important both from a theoretical point of view - for the development of conceptual provisions of marketing science, and from a practical point of view - for increasing the efficiency of enterprises in the conditions of increased competition and growing demands from consumers and society.

Analysis of recent studies and publications in which the problem has been addressed and which the author relies

Issues of ethical marketing, social responsibility of business and the formation of value-oriented marketing communications are considered in the works of both foreign and domestic scientists. Special attention is paid to the transformation of marketing in the conditions of digitalization, the growing role of consumer trust, as well as the integration of ethical principles into the strategic management of enterprises. In particular, the works of O. Dastan [1], F. Kotler [2], Zh.-Zh. Lamben [3], M. Arovina [4], N. Budy [5], I. Nikolayenko [6], V. Savchuk [7], L. Strii [8] and others.

Despite the significant contribution of the mentioned authors, the problem of systematic implementation of ethical marketing as a complex concept combining digital technologies, social responsibility and strategic communications requires further theoretical generalization and practical elaboration. In particular, the issue of integrating ethical principles into digital marketing tools and evaluating their effectiveness in the conditions of the modern market remains relevant.

The selection of previously unresolved parts of the general problem dedicated to the article

Despite the significant development of the theory and practice of marketing, corporate social responsibility and digital communications, the issue of complex integration of ethical marketing into the strategic management system of enterprises in the conditions of digital transformation of the economy remains insufficiently researched. In particular, the aspects of combining ethical principles with modern digital tools of marketing communications, mechanisms for ensuring transparency of business processes in the digital environment, as well as the effectiveness of using innovative technologies to build consumer trust need further development. The issues of practical implementation of ethical marketing in the activities of Ukrainian enterprises, taking into account the economic, social and institutional features of the national market, remain insufficiently disclosed. It is to these aspects that further research within the scope of this article is devoted.

Formulation of the goals of the article (setting of the task)

The purpose of the article is to study the essence and role of ethical marketing in the conditions of digital transformation of the economy, the analysis of modern approaches to its implementation in the activities of enterprises, as well as the development of practical recommendations for the use of digital tools to increase business transparency, build consumer trust and strengthen the competitive advantages of companies.

Presentation of the basic material of the study with full justification of the obtained scientific results

Ethical marketing is a concept of marketing activities based on the principles of integrity, openness and responsible attitude towards consumers and society. Its main idea is to promote goods and services in compliance with moral and ethical standards, avoiding manipulative influence and ensuring the authenticity of marketing communications. It is about forming responsible relations with customers, partners, competitors, employees and society as a whole. This approach involves taking into account the social consequences of marketing decisions and focusing business not only on making a profit, but also on the formation of long-term trust and a positive reputation.

Ethical marketing is based on a system of basic principles that determine the standards of responsible enterprise behavior in interaction with consumers and society. The first key principle is honesty, which involves the rejection of any form of manipulation, false promises, hidden terms or deliberate misrepresentation in marketing communications. This

approach builds trust in the brand and reduces the risks of reputation loss. The second important principle is the transparency of activity, which consists in the openness of information about the origin of products, the peculiarities of production processes, as well as the company's corporate values and practices. Transparency helps increase the level of trust on the part of consumers and partners. The third principle is respect for the client, which involves focusing on the real needs of consumers, respecting their rights, as well as responsible use of personal data in the digital environment. In modern conditions, this is one of the key elements of ethical business behavior. The fourth principle is social responsibility, which is manifested in the company's contribution to solving current social, environmental and ethical problems. This may include environmental initiatives, supporting community projects or implementing sustainable business practices.

Ethical marketing is not limited to the field of advertising communications, but covers a much wider range of tools for brand interaction with the market. It is a complex system that includes content marketing, public relations, consumer feedback management, pricing policy approaches, packaging design and labeling, as well as all other channels of the company's contact with the target audience. In this context, ethical marketing should be considered as a long-term strategic model of business development that goes beyond exclusively financial results. It is focused on forming stable relations with consumers, strengthening trust in the brand and creating added social value, thanks to which the company acquires not only economic efficiency, but also social significance.

Ethical marketing should be considered not only as a manifestation of moral and value choices of the company, but as an effective strategic tool that forms long-term competitive advantages of business. In modern scientific opinion, it is emphasized that the focus on creating value for the consumer is a key condition for the sustainable development of the enterprise. Thus, Philip Kotler emphasizes in the work “Marketing 4.0: Moving from Traditional to Digital” that marketing is not limited to finding ways to sell the manufactured product, but involves the formation of real value for the client. This approach shifts the focus from short-term results to building long-term relationships with consumers. In this context, ethical marketing acts as a factor in strengthening trust in the brand, increasing the level of customer loyalty and forming a stable reputation in the market. In addition, compliance with ethical principles in marketing activities allows you to minimize legal and reputational risks, which is

especially important in the conditions of increased regulatory control and growing demands from society.

Considering the practical dimension of ethical marketing, it is appropriate to highlight the main advantages that the company receives as a result of the implementation of ethical approaches in its marketing activities. These effects are complex in nature and affect both the external perception of the company and its internal development.

First. Strengthening trust and forming consumer loyalty. In today's competitive market, the level of trust becomes a decisive factor in the interaction between a brand and a consumer. Companies that adhere to the principles of honesty and openness in their activities form not only the fact of sales, but primarily long-term relationships with their audience. Transparency of business processes and responsibility in communications contribute to the transformation of casual buyers into regular customers, and later – into brand supporters. Consumers are increasingly choosing companies whose values align with their own beliefs, including social responsibility, environmental awareness, and ethical engagement with the market. Thus, ethical marketing plays the role of a kind of value “bridge” between the brand and the consumer, providing not only a rational, but also an emotional basis for the formation of sustainable loyalty.

Second. Formation of a positive image and business reputation. Ethical marketing plays an important role in forming a sustainable positive image of the company on the market. Enterprises that consistently adhere to the principles of social responsibility and ethical behavior in interaction with stakeholders receive a higher level of trust not only from consumers, but also from the professional and business community. In today's competitive environment, reputation turns into one of the company's key intangible assets, which directly affects its market opportunities and strategic development. A positive perception of the brand helps to expand the circle of partners, facilitates access to new markets and creates prerequisites for the formation of long-term business relationships. Thus, ethical behavior in marketing activities is not only a tool for reputational positioning, but also an important factor in increasing the investment and partnership attractiveness of the enterprise.

Third. Attracting and retaining qualified employees. Ethical marketing, as a component of the general corporate culture, significantly affects the company's attractiveness as an employer. Enterprises that demonstrate a consistent commitment to ethical principles and social responsibility become more competitive in the labor market and are able to attract

highly qualified specialists. Modern workers are increasingly oriented not only by the level of material remuneration, but also by the value conformity of the organization with their personal beliefs. Working conditions, corporate ethics, the company's social position and its attitude to social and environmental issues become important. As a result, more cohesive and motivated teams are formed, staff turnover is reduced and overall productivity is increased. Thus, the ethical approach in marketing indirectly strengthens the internal potential of the enterprise and its organizational stability.

Fourth. Reduction of risks and reduction of legal expenses. Adherence to the principles of ethical marketing is an important preventive mechanism that allows companies to minimize the likelihood of legal and regulatory risks. It is primarily about avoiding unfair advertising practices, violation of consumer rights, manipulative communications, as well as non-compliance with environmental and social standards. In today's legal environment, such violations can result in significant financial losses, including fines, legal costs and compensation payments. In addition, negative legal consequences are often accompanied by reputational losses, which further increases their impact on the company's operations. Therefore, the implementation of ethical approaches in marketing activities not only increases the level of business responsibility, but also ensures more stable and predictable functioning of the enterprise in the long term.

Fifth. Strengthening the competitiveness of the enterprise. Ethical marketing creates a unique value position for the company on the market, which allows it to stand out among competitors not only due to the product or price, but also through the way of doing business. In today's conditions of market competition, it is the intangible characteristics of the brand that increasingly become decisive in the process of consumer choice. Growing public attention to issues of social responsibility, environmental safety and transparency of business practices is forming a new model of consumer behavior. In such conditions, companies that integrate ethical principles into their marketing activities gain an additional competitive advantage and more stable positions on the market. Thus, ethical marketing is not only a tool for brand differentiation, but also a strategic factor for increasing its long-term market efficiency.

Sixth. Long-term sustainability of business. Ethical marketing is an important factor in ensuring the strategic stability of the enterprise in the long term. Its implementation contributes to the formation of a balanced system of relationships with key

stakeholders, including consumers, suppliers, partners, investors and employees. Due to consistent adherence to ethical principles, the company builds trust at all levels of interaction, which creates a basis for stable operation even in conditions of market instability and external challenges. Such relationships have a cumulative effect and form long-term capital of trust, which is one of the most valuable intangible assets of modern business. As a result, an ethical approach in marketing activities ensures not only current efficiency, but also increases the company's adaptability to changes in the external environment, contributing to its sustainable development and strategic stability.

Ethical marketing should be interpreted not only as a system of compliance with moral and value norms in business, but also as an integral long-term strategic model of the company's development. In this approach, ethical principles are integrated into all key business processes – from product development to consumer communication and brand reputation management.

In modern practice, there are a number of companies that consistently implement ethical standards in their marketing and operational strategies, demonstrating the effectiveness of such an approach as a factor of sustainable development and competitive advantage:

a) TOMS: a model of social entrepreneurship. The TOMS company is one of the most famous examples of the integration of a social component into a business model, which is directly related to the principles of ethical marketing. Its activity is based on the concept of “One for One” (“one for one”), according to which each purchased pair of shoes contributed to the transfer of a similar pair to children in need. This approach made it possible to combine commercial efficiency with the realization of a social mission, turning the consumption process into a tool of charitable influence. In this model, the consumer is not only a buyer, but also a participant in a socially significant initiative. Over time, the company evolved from a direct product-by-product model to a more comprehensive approach, directing part of the profit to the implementation of social projects. This indicates the adaptation of the ethical strategy to the long-term conditions of sustainable development and the expansion of the spectrum of social impact of business;

b) Lush: principles of transparency and social activism. The cosmetic brand Lush is a vivid example of a company that consistently integrates the principles of ethical marketing into its corporate and communication policy. The brand's activities are based on a high level of openness, social responsibility and a clearly articulated ethical position. In particular, the company adheres to the policy of refusing to test

products on animals, actively supports environmental initiatives and implements sustainable practices in production processes. In addition, Lush regularly publicly expresses its position on current social and ethical issues, which reinforces its image as a socially oriented brand. This level of transparency and value certainty contributes to the formation of a loyal community of consumers who share similar beliefs around the brand. As a result, the ethical component becomes not only an element of reputation, but also an important factor in the company's long-term competitive advantage;

c) Starbucks: implementing ethical supply practices. Starbucks is an example of a global business that systematically integrates ethical marketing principles into its supply chain. One of the key tools for the implementation of this policy is the CAFE Practices (Coffee and Farmer Equity Practices) program, aimed at establishing ethical standards in the process of purchasing coffee raw materials. As part of this initiative, the company cooperates with a large number of farms in different regions of the world, paying special attention to the observance of fair working conditions, ecological responsibility of production and stable product quality. This approach allows not only to ensure quality control at all stages of supply, but also to form more stable and long-term partnerships with manufacturers. As a result of implementing ethical standards in the supply system, Starbucks increases the stability of its business, reduces the risks of disruptions in the supply chain and strengthens the reputation of a socially responsible global company;

d) Everlane: transparency as the basis of the business model. The company Everlane, which works in the field of clothing production, is an example of the implementation of the concept of so-called “radical transparency” within the framework of ethical marketing. Its business model is based on openly informing consumers about all key stages of product creation. In particular, the brand publishes a detailed structure of the cost of goods, discloses information about production facilities, as well as working conditions at partner factories. This level of openness allows consumers to more consciously evaluate both the real value of the product and the ethical aspects of its origin. As a result, transparency becomes not only an element of communication policy, but also a key competitive advantage of the brand, which builds trust, strengthens customer loyalty and influences their choice in favor of the company;

e) Laska: model of charity resale. The Laska brand is an example of a socially oriented business model that combines commercial activity with a

charitable and environmental component. The basis of its work is the system of receiving used clothes, which, after sorting and preparation for reuse, are sold through a network of stores. The funds received are directed to the financing of social and charitable projects, which allows to transform the usual process of consumption into a mechanism for supporting socially important initiatives. Thus, every purchase within this model acquires additional social meaning. The brand's activities are based on the principles of environmental responsibility, in particular the idea of reusing resources and reducing the amount of textile waste, as well as the concept of social mutual aid. As a result, “Laska” forms an example of a sustainable business, where ethical values are integrated into all stages of the company's operation.

The given examples demonstrate the variety of practical models of implementation of ethical marketing in the activities of modern companies. They cover a wide range of approaches – from participation in social and charitable initiatives to ensuring transparency of communications, forming responsible supply chains and implementing internal corporate standards. A common feature of all the considered cases is that ethical principles are not integrated episodically, but systematically, becoming a component of a long-term business strategy.

The implementation of the principles of ethical marketing in the company's activities does not require fragmentary solutions, but a systematic and strategically balanced approach. It is about the consistent formation of an internal corporate culture that determines the company's behavior at all levels of interaction with the market and society.

First. Formation of the company's value base. The first and basic stage is a clear definition of the mission, vision and system of corporate values. They should reflect the real practice of the enterprise, and not perform a decorative or declarative function for external communications. At this stage, it is important to specify exactly what the company understands by the concept of “ethical brand”, as well as to establish clear standards of behavior that it will adhere to in its activities. Correct example of wording: “Our mission is to support the development of small businesses by creating affordable and effective digital solutions that provide measurable and practical results.” Incorrect wording example: “We strive to be leaders in the digital sphere and make the world a better place.” This approach allows you to avoid excessively abstract and declarative statements and ensures the realism and measurability of corporate goals, which is an important condition for the effective implementation of ethical marketing.

Second. Definition of ethical principles of communication. The next important stage of implementing ethical marketing is the formation of clear internal standards of the company's communication policy. It is about creating a system of rules that regulate the content of content, advertising messages and the nature of interaction with customers on all communication channels. The key principle at this stage is the rejection of manipulative practices, excessive emotional influences, exaggerations or creation of artificial pressure on the consumer. Instead, communication should be based on the principles of honesty, transparency and full disclosure of the product's characteristics, including its benefits and objective limitations. This approach makes it possible to form realistic expectations of consumers and ensures their correspondence to the actual experience of using the product. Correct wording example: "Our products are made from natural ingredients without the addition of artificial colors and preservatives." Incorrect wording example: "Buy now – tomorrow will be too late!" The last wording demonstrates the use of artificial scarcity and emotional pressure, which contradicts the principles of ethical marketing and can lead to the formation of mistrust of the brand in the long term.

Third. Construction of transparent business processes. An important stage in the implementation of ethical marketing is the formation of a system of transparency at all levels of the company's activities. This involves openly informing consumers about the origin of products, the structure of production processes, supply chains, as well as the potential impact of the company's activities on the environment. When difficult or sensitive issues arise, the company should not ignore or silence them. On the contrary, the ethical approach involves their recognition and explanation of ways of solving or minimizing negative consequences. It is this kind of openness that builds trust and strengthens brand reputation as consumers increasingly value honesty in communication. Correct wording example: "This product received high quality ratings based on independent expert studies." Incorrect wording example: "This product is the best on the market!" The last statement has the character of a subjective generalization and does not contain supporting evidence, which reduces the level of trust and contradicts the principles of transparent communication.

Fourth. Involvement of the team in the ethical culture of the company. An equally important element of the implementation of ethical marketing is the formation of the internal involvement of personnel in the company's values. It is about employees' conscious understanding of the importance of ethics in business and its practical manifestation in daily

professional activities. In this context, it is advisable not only to communicate corporate principles, but also to ensure their real implementation through internal policies, training and support for initiatives related to social responsibility. It is important to create an environment in which employees can propose and implement ideas that correspond to the values of sustainable and responsible business. Consistency between the external image of the company and its internal corporate culture is of particular importance. If an organization declares its orientation to people, then this must be confirmed by real practices of caring for its own employees, which is a key condition of trust both within the company and on the part of external stakeholders.

Fifth. Monitoring and correction of ethical practices. The final, but continuous stage of the implementation of ethical marketing is the systematic monitoring of the compliance of marketing activities with the established ethical principles. It is a regular assessment of the extent to which the company's practical actions are consistent with the declared values and standards of responsible behavior. An important tool of this process is feedback from key stakeholders – customers, partners and employees. Its analysis allows identifying potential gaps between the audience's expectations and the company's actual activity, as well as responding to them in a timely manner. An ethical approach implies readiness for change, openness to constructive dialogue, and constant improvement of business practices. In this context, ethics is considered not as a static set of rules, but as a dynamic system that needs regular review and adaptation to changes in the external environment and social expectations.

Implementation of ethical marketing, despite a significant number of strategic advantages, is not a simple process and is accompanied by a number of organizational, managerial and communication challenges.

a) costs for implementing ethical practices. One of the key challenges in the process of integrating ethical marketing is the financial aspect of its implementation. Adherence to high ethical standards often requires additional resources, which is especially noticeable for small and medium-sized enterprises with limited budget opportunities. Such costs may include investing in socially responsible supply chains, using environmentally safe materials, and ensuring proper and fair working conditions at all stages of production. In aggregate, this increases the cost of production and requires a more balanced approach to financial planning;

b) consumer skepticism. One of the essential challenges of ethical marketing is the ambiguous

perception of such approaches by consumers. Not all segments of the audience are willing to pay a higher price for products that meet ethical or environmental standards, potentially limiting demand for such products and services. In many cases, especially in conditions of economic instability or limited purchasing power, consumers prefer more affordable alternatives, even if they do not fully comply with the principles of ethical production or consumption. This creates additional barriers to the dissemination of ethical practices in the mass market;

c) risk of “greenwashing”. One of the most critical risks in the field of ethical marketing is the phenomenon of so-called “greenwashing” – a situation where companies only declare environmental or ethical principles without actually implementing them in their operational activities. In such cases, the illusion of responsible business is created, which is not supported by real changes. Such a practice has negative consequences both for the enterprises themselves and for the market as a whole. It leads to a loss of trust on the part of consumers, a deterioration of the brand’s reputation, and in some cases - to legal sanctions and regulatory restrictions.

Despite the presence of certain challenges, ethical marketing shows significant potential as a tool for building long-term trust, strengthening business reputation and consolidating a loyal community around a brand.

In today’s conditions of digital transformation of the economy, digital technologies are one of the key tools for the practical implementation of the concept of ethical marketing. Digital platforms, social networks and modern communication tools form a new environment of interaction between the brand and the consumer, in which the importance of openness, responsiveness and two-way dialogue is increasing.

First. Storytelling as a tool for forming the brand’s ethical identity. One of the most effective digital tools within ethical marketing is storytelling, which is based on using real stories to represent brand values. Its essence lies in the creation of meaningful, emotionally saturated content that reflects the real impact of the company’s activities on society, local communities or the environment. Stories related to positive changes – the transformation of people’s life situations, the development of local communities or the implementation of environmental initiatives – are particularly important. Such content contributes to the simultaneous achievement of several strategic effects, in particular: strengthening the emotional connection between the brand and the consumer; increasing the level of trust in the company;

strengthening its social and reputational position on the market. At the same time, the effectiveness of storytelling directly depends on its authenticity and credibility. In today’s information environment, consumers have a high level of criticality and are able to quickly recognize artificially created or manipulative narratives, which emphasizes the importance of transparency and sincerity in brand communications.

Second. Video content as a tool for increasing transparency and trust. Video content is one of the most influential formats of digital communication, which allows you to visually represent the ethical practices of the enterprise. Thanks to its visual nature, it provides a deeper perception of information and helps the consumer to form a holistic view of the brand’s activities. Documentary video materials, reports from production sites, demonstration of the working conditions of the staff, sources of supply of raw materials, as well as coverage of the implementation of social and environmental initiatives significantly increase the level of business openness. This format of communication allows consumers to directly observe processes that previously remained “closed” to an external audience. The use of video content provides a number of important effects, in particular: confirmation of compliance of the company’s actual activities with declared ethical standards; reduction of information asymmetry between the producer and the consumer; strengthening the emotional involvement of the audience through visual and narrative impact.

Third. Interactive digital campaigns as a tool for attracting consumers. Interactive digital campaigns are an important element of modern ethical marketing, as they change the traditional model of communication, turning the consumer from a passive recipient of information to an active participant in socially significant processes. This approach significantly strengthens the audience’s involvement and contributes to the formation of a deeper interaction between the brand and society. The use of online platforms, mobile applications, gamification tools and crowdsourcing mechanisms creates opportunities to involve consumers in solving current social and environmental challenges.

Fourth. Data analytics and personalization of ethical communications. The modern stage of digital transformation opens up for business wide opportunities for using large data sets (Big Data) in order to gain a deeper understanding of the behavior, needs and value orientations of consumers. This creates the prerequisites for moving to a more accurate and meaningful level of communication, where ethical messages can be adapted to specific audience segments. The use of analytical tools allows companies to increase the

effectiveness of ethical marketing due to: more detailed segmentation of consumers according to their level of social and environmental awareness; personalization of communication content according to individual value orientations; operational monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of ethical marketing campaigns in real time.

Fifth. Use of transparency technologies: blockchain and digital certificates. Modern innovative technologies, in particular blockchain, open up new opportunities for ensuring a high level of transparency in supply chains and confirming product compliance with ethical standards. Their use makes it possible to create immutable and verifiable digital records that record the path of goods from the manufacturer to the final consumer.

Thus, digital technologies act as an important catalyst for the development of ethical marketing, ensuring the transformation of communication formats between business and consumers, increasing the level of transparency of business processes and creating conditions for more active involvement of the audience in socially responsible initiatives.

In modern conditions of transformation of the economy and social relations in Ukraine, ethical marketing is gradually acquiring the status of not so much an innovative approach as a necessary element of strategic management of enterprises. This is due to a complex of factors, including: the growth of the level of social and environmental awareness of consumers, the strengthening of global challenges of sustainable development, as well as the active spread of the concept of responsible business in global practice.

The tendency to spread the principles of ethical marketing among start-ups, as well as small and medium-sized enterprises, is particularly pronounced. Unlike large corporations with a more inert management structure, these companies are usually characterized by higher adaptability and are quicker to integrate socially responsible approaches into their operational and marketing activities. Modern Ukrainian brands are increasingly focused on supporting local initiatives and national manufacturers, using environmentally friendly materials, and introducing elements of the circular economy into production processes. This transformation of business models allows not only to reduce the negative impact on the environment, but also strengthens the social component of the product, forming added value for the consumer. As a result, ethical marketing is not only a positioning tool for such enterprises, but also an important factor in long-term competitiveness and sustainable development.

An important factor in the development of ethical marketing in Ukraine is the transformation of consumer behavior and value orientations of the population. The modern Ukrainian consumer is gradually moving away from the exclusively price-oriented model of choosing goods and services, increasingly taking into account the intangible characteristics of the brand, in particular its values and social position. In the process of making a purchase decision, issues of environmental responsibility of production, ethical business behavior, compliance with the labor rights of employees, as well as the participation of companies in socially significant initiatives are becoming more and more important. Such criteria are gradually becoming important determinants of consumer choice along with traditional parameters of quality and price. In this context, ethical marketing functions as a key tool for building and maintaining trust between business and consumers, which, in turn, is a basic element of long-term and stable relationships in the market.

The transparency of communications is gaining particular importance in the context of the digital transformation of society and the increasing availability of information resources. In such conditions, business openness regarding production processes, sources of origin of raw materials, working conditions of personnel and implementation of social initiatives becomes a key factor in building trust in the brand. This level of openness allows companies to build a more authentic and consistent image, as well as significantly reduce the risks of reputational losses associated with information opacity or mistrust on the part of the audience. At the same time, the importance of responsible content is growing, which performs not only an informative function, but also participates in the formation of consumer value orientations. As a result, marketing communications are gradually transformed into an important tool for the development of a more conscious model of consumer behavior, focused on ethical and socially responsible principles of choice.

The prospects for the development of ethical marketing in Ukraine are determined by the strengthening of business integration into the international economic space, the development of state policy in the field of social responsibility and ecology, as well as the active implementation of digital technologies that increase the transparency and efficiency of communications. Ethical marketing becomes especially relevant in the conditions of socio-economic challenges, when responsible business behavior becomes an important factor in supporting society and strengthening consumer trust. In such

conditions, companies that integrate ethical principles into their own activities receive not only reputational advantages, but also form new business standards. Consequently, ethical marketing in Ukraine is gradually being transformed into a systemic tool for ensuring the long-term competitiveness of enterprises.

Despite the gradual spread of ethical marketing in Ukraine, its development is restrained by a number of systemic problems. One of the main ones is a formal approach to the implementation of ethical practices, when social responsibility is used mainly as an image element without real changes in the company's activities. Among the important barriers, it is also worth highlighting the insufficient regulatory and legal regulation, the limited purchasing power of the population, the low level of awareness of business and consumers regarding the principles of ethical marketing, as well as the shortage of specialists in the field of sustainable development and corporate responsibility. Additionally, economic and military challenges have an additional negative impact, forcing companies to focus mainly on short-term financial stability. At the same time, the general level of mistrust in institutions and businesses remains a significant problem, which makes it difficult to form long-term and trusting relationships between brands and consumers.

Therefore, the development of ethical marketing in Ukraine is complicated by a set of interrelated factors, including the formal nature of individual initiatives, the imperfection of the regulatory environment, economic difficulties, and an insufficient level of public trust. Overcoming these barriers requires a comprehensive approach, which includes increasing the transparency of business processes, improving legislative regulation, developing professional education in the field of responsible business, and popularizing the culture of conscious consumption. Only under the condition of systematic implementation of such changes will ethical marketing be able to transform from a separate trend into a full-fledged strategic foundation for the sustainable development of Ukrainian enterprises.

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**ЕТИЧНИЙ МАРКЕТИНГ ЯК СТРАТЕГІЧНИЙ
НАПРЯМ РОЗВИТКУ БІЗНЕСУ В УМОВАХ
ЦИФРОВОЇ ЕКОНОМІКИ**

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У статті досліджено сутність та значення етичного маркетингу в умовах цифрової трансформації економіки та зростання ролі соціально відповідального бізнесу. Особливу увагу приділено принципам етичного маркетингу, його стратегічному значенню для формування довіри споживачів, зміцнення репутації бренду та забезпечення довгострокової конкурентоспроможності підприємств. Проведено аналіз сучасних тенденцій розвитку етичного маркетингу, цифрових інструментів підтримки етичних комунікацій, а також практичного досвіду впровадження етичних принципів у діяльність зарубіжних та українських компаній. Визначено основні проблеми та обмеження розвитку етичного маркетингу в Україні, зокрема формальний характер окремих етичних ініціатив, недостатній рівень нормативного забезпечення, низьку обізнаність споживачів і бізнесу, а також вплив економічних та соціальних викликів. На основі виявлених тенденцій і сучасних вимог ринку обґрунтовано напрями удосконалення механізмів впровадження етичного маркетингу через підвищення прозорості бізнес-процесів, розвиток цифрових технологій, формування культури відповідального споживання та посилення соціальної відповідальності підприємств. Запропоновані рекомендації спрямовані на підвищення ефективності маркетингових комунікацій, зміцнення довіри до брендів та забезпечення сталого розвитку бізнесу. Дістали подальшого розвитку теоретичні положення та практичні підходи до використання етичного маркетингу як стратегічного інструменту розвитку підприємств у цифровому середовищі. Зокрема, удосконалено підхід до інтеграції цифрових технологій у систему етичних маркетингових комунікацій. Запропоновано практичні рекомендації щодо використання сторітелінгу, відеоконтенту, інтерактивних цифрових кампаній, Big Data та технологій прозорості для посилення ефективності етичного маркетингу.

Ключові слова: етичний маркетинг, соціальна відповідальність бізнесу, цифрові технології, прозорість комунікацій, довіра споживачів, репутація бренду, етичні стандарти, стратегічний розвиток.

**ETHICAL MARKETING AS A STRATEGIC DIRECTION
OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL
ECONOMY**

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The article examines the essence and significance of ethical marketing in the conditions of digital transformation of the economy and the growing role of socially responsible business. Special attention is paid to the principles of ethical marketing, its strategic importance for building consumer trust, strengthening brand reputation and ensuring long-term competitiveness of enterprises. An analysis of modern trends in the development of ethical marketing, digital tools for supporting ethical communications, as well as practical experience of implementing ethical principles in the activities of foreign and Ukrainian companies was carried out. The main problems and limitations of the development of ethical marketing in Ukraine are identified, in particular the formal nature of certain ethical initiatives, the insufficient level of regulatory support, low awareness of consumers and businesses, as well as the impact of economic and social challenges. Based on the identified trends and modern market requirements, directions for improving the mechanisms of implementing ethical marketing through increasing the transparency of business processes, the development of digital technologies, the formation of a culture of responsible consumption, and strengthening the social responsibility of enterprises have been substantiated. The proposed recommendations are aimed at increasing the effectiveness of marketing communications, strengthening trust in brands and ensuring sustainable business development. Theoretical positions and practical approaches to the use of ethical marketing as a strategic tool for the development of enterprises in the digital environment were further developed. In particular, the approach to the integration of digital technologies into the system of ethical marketing communications has been improved. Practical recommendations for using storytelling, video content, interactive digital campaigns, Big Data and transparency technologies to enhance the effectiveness of ethical marketing are offered.

Keywords: ethical marketing, social responsibility of business, digital technologies, transparency of communications, consumer trust, brand reputation, ethical standards, strategic development.

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