

***Digital Drivers of Russian Advertising Market:
Problems of Management***

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyse the one of the most rapidly growing segments of the media-industry: the digital market and the drivers of its growth, as well as to identify the best ways of its management. The authors use the example of Russia: the country with the dynamically growing advertising market. The analysis of the relevant content-based Internet advertising classifications constitute the methodological importance of this work. The research includes the study of relations among the key market players (advertisers, media-companies, communication agencies and research companies), accompanying the changes happening at the advertising market as the evidence of their transforming impact. The authors find out that recent transformations intensify the development of the Internet communications by spanning all the traditional segments of the communication industry - television, radio, print press and outdoor communications. However, the absence of the clear control systems in Internet communications might lead to the downturn of interest to Internet advertising among the key advertisers. Only the coordinated actions of all the interested market participants will allow achieving the transparency of new communication formats. Thus, the consensus becomes an important goal of the modern Russian communications' management. This analysis is important by clarification of the transforming impact of the digital drivers under the influence of the social and economic factors. The efficient digital communication requires the complex managerial action that was deeply analysed in this study.

Keywords: Marketing Communications, Digital Technologies, Media, Advertising Market

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Introduction

The advertising industry is one of the intensively expanding segments of global as well as Russian economies. Therefore, the accurate forecast of its development determines the several important directions: the advertisers' communication strategies and the general state of the advertising management as well as the functioning of the various media, which considerable part bases its activity on the advertising business models.

The structure of the digital market.

In order to comprehend the situation on the digital advertising market we should consider the fact that globally and in Russia, the Internet industry represents the four markets (Runet Economics, 2016):

- digital communications' market (advertising and marketing),
- infrastructure (software, hosting and domains),
- electronic content market (games, music, books, mass media and video),
- E-commerce market (retail, e-payments and traveling).

The digital drivers changing the media-landscape and the structure of communications on the media-advertising market have the system-forming character proving the relevance of the study. On the one hand, the digital drivers intensify the development of the market of the Internet communications as part of the media-advertising industry. On the other hand, it is important to understand that digital drivers generate the competitive environment and affect the classical media, by contributing to their infiltrating into Internet and engaging the digital inventory. In many ways, these are the same media, but already in the digital medium (Chaffey et al., 2010). This results to the redistribution of the media investments outflowing from the traditional mass media into Internet by causing the stagnation and slowing down of some segments along with the boost in others. This flow promotes the certain communication strategies regarding to the choice of media. In order to compete with Internet, the traditional players have to introduce the new technologies: transparent and attractive for advertisers.

General characteristics of the modern state of the digital advertising market

The digital communications are becoming the paramount factor of the entire communications' market growth. The Global Digital report 2018 of WeAreSocial and Hootsuite reveal there are more than 4 billion people around the world using the Internet (Figure 1).

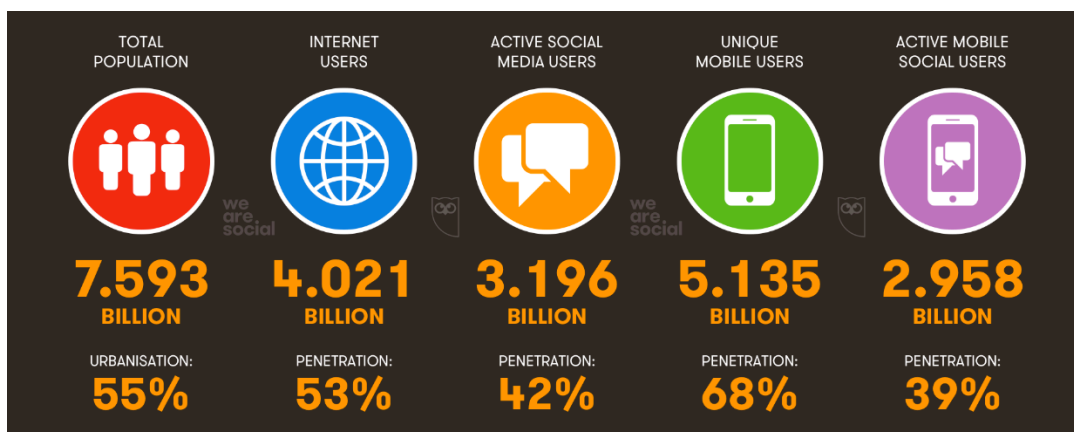


Figure 1. Digital around the world in 2018. Key statistical indicators for the world's Internet, mobile and social media users, available at <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

In its report on global advertising market trends, released in December 2018, Magna, the centralized IPG Mediabrands resource, reveals that global advertising revenue grew by a record 7.2% in 2018 by reaching \$552 billion in 70 countries analysed by Magna. That is the strongest growth rate since 2010, when the ad market recovered after the two years' recession, and the second strongest since 2004, thanks to the combination of the strong demand and the cyclical drivers.

The Macroeconomic situation in country, mainly on the consumers' level (solvent demand, changed consumption structure etc.) remains the key factor affecting the state of the advertising market (Stolyarova, 2017). However, after the crisis of 2015, the advertising market in Russia recovered much quicker than the rest of the country's economy.

The Internet advertising continues dynamically growing as its formats rapidly evolve. In the conditions of uncertainty caused by the economic and political situation in Russia in 2014-2015 and the drop of the most commodity markets, the Internet segment growth slowed down considerably while continued by 18% and 15% respectively (Figure 2).

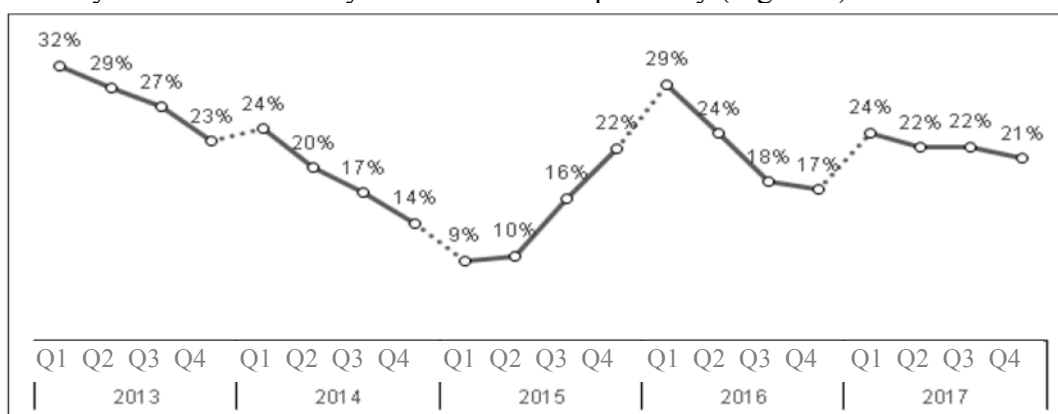


Figure 2. The Internet advertising market growth in 2013-2017, Russia, - «Russian Advertising Almanac – 2017, - <http://www.akarussia.ru/download/rre18.pdf>
 In 2018, the Russian advertising market grew by 12%, by reaching the 469 billion roubles. The share of marketing services amounted to 115 billion roubles (Figure 3). By taking into the consideration the creative and production budgets as well as the advertising agencies fees, the market amounted to 810-830 billion roubles (12-13 billion USD).

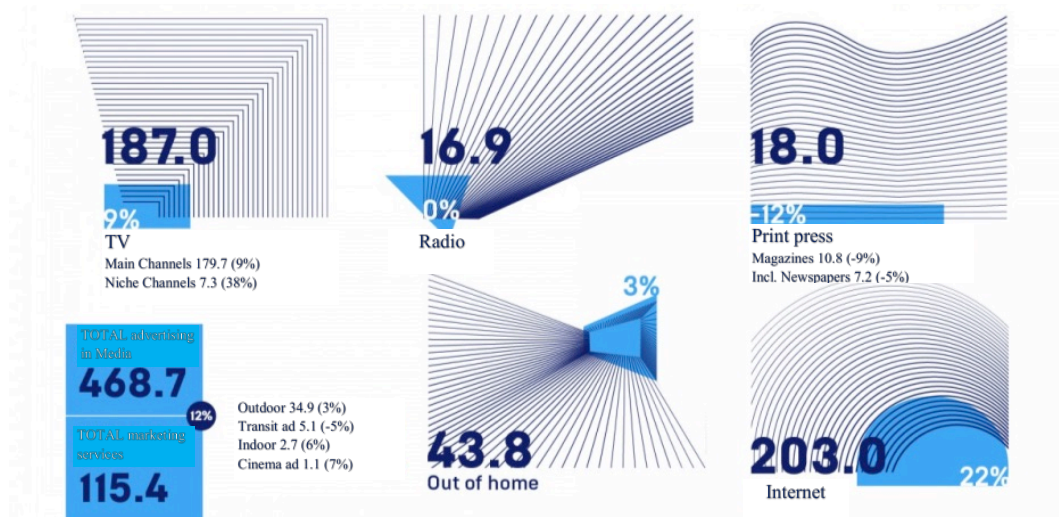


Figure 3. The size of marketing communications in 2018 (bio RUB), Russia
 Source: Russian Association of Communication Agencies, -
http://www.akarussia.ru/knowledge/market_size/id8690

The significant size of Internet in Russian advertising pie is largely explained by a relatively low entrance threshold for small and medium-sized businesses (Radkevich, 2016), the possibility of distanced ad placement in situation of wide geographical extent of the country as well as the presence of the major domestic players in search engines, mail and social media.

2. Theoretical background

The study of the impact of digital drivers in communication industry is one of the new fields in the global science in area of economics, marketing and marketing communications coming from the emerging phenomenon itself. The field has expanded from Internet marketing to the exploration of communication patterns of the digital medium that is certainly a wider object of study. One of the important aspects of this study is the analysis of the points of influence of digital intensifiers on the basic sectors of the media-advertising market and its key subjects including the sphere of the methodological management of these processes.

The authors base their study on the consistent patterns characterizing the dependence of the advertising industry development on the overall economic situation. In this regards one has to mention the works of the authors (e.g. Picard, 2011; Doyle, 2013; Tellis G. and Tellis K., 2009; Sinclair, 2012; Chang and Chan-Olmsted, 2005.), who explored the media economy advertising bond and the correlation between the overall state of economy and the activity on the advertising market.

During the economic crisis, the company managers demonstrate the more lenient attitude towards the digital instruments than the classical media where in conditions of the austere economy the target audience express reaction clearer and the expenses on communicating are more justified. In this connection, the authors deemed it necessary to study the materials covering the communication activity in the period of recession when the drop in advertising activity is a universal tendency (Veselov, 2009).

Therefore, the authors take into consideration the results of the researches of Russian advertising market where the structural shift towards the digital communication became the

legitimate outcome in the period of the economy's after-crisis recovery. This phenomenon was deeply analysed by numerous authors (Veselov, 2010; Kolomiez 2009, Kovylov A.I., 2016), whose works have significantly contributed to the study of formation of the digital medium in Russia. These researchers have formed the understanding of the fact that crisis in communication was largely caused by the social-economic consequences of the technical revolution of the late XX - early XXI centuries and structural reforms of the media-advertising sphere. According to the multiple specialists, the mentioned tendencies acquire much richer contents when analysed on the level of particular markets, in the aspect of the media advertising comparisons. The author derived significant informational support from the annually issued "Advertising Almanac", prepared by Association of communications agencies of Russia (AKAR).

Methodology

The approach applied in this study is oriented towards the drawing of conclusions based on prognostic analysis of the market subjects' behaviour under the influence of the digital drivers. Generally, in the global professional discourse one can talk of practically zero opportunity for a single scientist to conduct his own field research - both on the macro level as well as at the level of a single company. The factor of the trade secrets and the high-tech requirements regarding the research tools explain such a limited access to the object of study. Therefore, in order to understand the processes taking place in the digital advertising market one has to conduct the comparative analysis of the reports and research materials of the global companies, authoritative Russian research organizations as well as to apply the own experience of work in such companies and organizations. The empirical base for the work is comprised of the data from the industrial monitoring of the advertising on Russian market (the company Mediascope, former TNS Russia). Moreover, the authors use the data of prognostic analytical study of international companies ZenithOptimedia and GroupM, the materials of the analytical centre Vi (now merged with Gasprommedia, forming together the National Advertising Alliance) and own experience.

Nevertheless, the analysis of introducing the digital technologies on the level of a single corporation can also help in understanding of the processes as they really are. This study also uses the results of a survey, conducted by the authors among the Russian companies' representatives, whose professional activity centres on Internet promotion and digital marketing, regarding the effectiveness of investments in various digital segments.

The analysis and the ways of possible realization of the goal allowed formulating the following research questions:

- Which changes in communication are connected with the wide use of mobile gadgets?
- What is the advantage of the digital measuring of the communication efficiency in comparison with traditional researches?
- What kind of digital communication yield the best return on investment?
- How does the individual mediatization manifest itself and which tendencies in the content development can be registered?
- How do the digital drivers affect the classical media?

Thus, the proposition of this study might be the following: the means of the purely technological factors cannot solve the problem of transparency in the digital medium and in the Internet. The solution is rooted in the intersection of the organizational and managerial

efforts of the entities in charge. The digital drivers, which intensify the development of the advertising market and marketing communications, have the technological form but the social and economic content; their impact sets the complex changes in the life of society. The digital drivers of the market do not only affect the market but also change the quality of the entire advertising scope, drastically affecting all the segments of the media-advertising market. We observe the proof of this impact in the changed managerial behaviour of the key market players - advertisers, as well as agencies, and even consumers.

This study includes the following drivers of market growth:

- New conditions and formats of communication dictated by the use of mobile Gadgets;
- Communication efficiency control systems accessible in digital media;
- Increased consumer activity and the incipience of a significant C2C (consumer-to-consumer) communication segment;
- The system of digital content and its optimization, including the development of cloud storage technologies and visualization of content that expands the formats for delivering information to the target audience;
- The transformation of social networks from communication platforms to content generators, acquiring new monetization possibilities; and the impact of digital technologies on non-digital tools and media.

Let us to examine the impact of these drivers more in details.

3. The impact of digital drivers: new challenges

3.1. Formation of mobile media

According to Mediascop data for 2018, the audience of mobile Internet in Russia reached 75 million people, corresponding to more than 60% of the Russian population, bypassing the desktop users, and continue to steady grow (Mediascope, 2019)

Due to saturation, the segment's growth rate will gradually slow down, but this effect is quite natural for a mature market. Today, the accretion occurs primarily not among the youth but among the middle aged, 40+ population, thus, the audience "matures" and "ages." Today, all the generations, each distinguished by its own activity and intensity of using this channel, exploit the mobile Internet. That is becoming the main overview channel for the young and active audience; however, the other audiences still require the other screens - television and desktop. Perhaps, the next step will be the cross-platform integration of the mobile and the desktop allowing combining the advertising formats regardless of the gadget used at a particular moment of the time.

The players of Russian market confirm the willingness of their clients to invest into mobile, along with deeper cross-media digital analytics, which will allow understanding the structure of spending and forecasting efficiency. The growth of media advertising on mobile platforms is explained by the multiple opportunities of interactive communication with the user, and, therefore, the growing interest among the part of the advertisers. Carrying the personalized message to a concrete user via mobile gadgets grows in value. The reason is the increased involvement in consumption, as well as a higher level of trust to the information on mobile gadget screen, along with the possibility of adapting the advertising to the users' query.

3.2. Technologies for expanding analytical possibilities

An important trend at today's market are mergers and partnerships of companies, which have the access to big data. Retailers, banks, or telecom operators store such data. Access to a vast audience allows obtaining the valuable information about the users and making the targeted offers, which take into consideration the particularities of their online and offline behaviour, movement routes, purchases etc.

However, there is a number of other efficient instruments. GetResponse researchers noted in 2017, the marketers called the email and social media the two top digital channels with a high return on investment (ROI). The research was based on a survey of 2,520 digital marketers from around the globe, working in B2C and B2B: 18% of the respondents from all branches noted that email marketing produced the best ROI; social media came the second with 17%; SEO (Search Engine Optimization) took the third place (14%); and context network advertising was the fourth (12%). The respondents employed in marketing and advertising agencies rated email marketing, SMM (Social Media Marketing), and search optimization as the top three high ROI channels.

The authors based their research on a survey of 140 respondents corroborated by the global selection data on the Russian material. Companies take the decisive steps towards the developing of digital formats or marketing communications based on a high evaluation of their efficiency. The respondents employed into digital promotion, including FMCG companies and retail and business services representatives, have also demonstrated their partiality to email marketing (22%), at higher rate than in the global survey. SEO optimization proved less popular, in connection with its technical requirements for certain qualifications (15%). While, the only 40-50% of respondents in Russia (75% in Moscow) provide the electronic address vs. the mobile telephone number that demonstrates the still low use of this channel by consumers.

Today, the number of digital instruments used by the companies grew from 5-7 to 7-9. More than 25% use more than 10 digital instruments (IAB Barometer, 2018).

The opinion survey among the key advertisers in 2018 highlighted the main changes at the market of the interactive advertising during the last year. Among the prominent ones became the growth of the mobile content consumption, the development of the video formats, social networks as well as the attention to the quality of the content.

To summarize, the lack of media measurements becomes a restraining factor in the development of the new segments in classical media as well as Internet. The measurements help the advertisers to identify the new marketing priorities and effectively manage their budgets. The advertising in Russia will make an evolutionary leap when Russian marketers learn to measure all the accessible content consumption screens (e.g., desktops, mobile gadgets, Smart TVs, televisions) and to combine their results, (Radkevich, 2017).

3.3. Intensive development of niche, narrow professional and visual social networks

This driver allows advertisers to concentrate more specifically on their chosen target audiences. In the new digital conditions, the individuals' trajectories in sphere of the media "landscape" become so diversified that applying the traditional advertising schemes become impossible. The opposition of the centralized mass media and personalized media environments manifest in the acceleration of social media development. Among the main trends of the SMM segment, it is necessary to note the improvement in the quality of SMM thanks to the increased professionalism of the market participants. This was especially important in Russia, lacking the professional infrastructure for training of digital communications specialists. Today the situation has changed for better thanks to the emerging university and college educational programs as well as the developed system of conferences and industrial events. Apart from that, the Russian advertisers are wary of actively promoting their brands in social networks due to unpredictable effects and non-targeted contents that the marketers have not yet learned to control (Tulik, 2017).

The targeted advertising in social networks became the most demanded format (according to more than 80% of interviewed advertisers) with the highest growth: 48% of respondents expected to grow its share in the advertising budgets of companies in 2019 (IAB_Barometer, 2018).

3.4. Mediatisation of trade partners and consumers

Proactive consumer behaviour (when the consumer finds it useful to initiate the contact with an advertiser) calls for complex approaches to SMM promotion and other types of the digital communications. The changing media environment modifies the media consumption and generates the optimal conditions for innovation and individual experimentation in this field.

The technological innovations in the sphere of communications are so radical that they can cause the restructuring of the bases of the entire industry. The main trend of these institutional shifts is driven by the transformation of the consumer into the active subject of communication (Zborovskaya, 2015). The process of media consumption is no longer limited by a certain place and time of action. The transformation of electronic media into a natural habitat – a process that specialists call "mediatisation" - is a highly ambiguous in terms of its social, cultural, and economic consequences (Kolomic, 2009). It is equally ambivalent for advertising, as the forms of relations in all social institutions – state, family, education, etc. – undergo changes. Digitalization allows users to create the communicational messages that are impossible to generate in the traditional technology, at a relatively low cost.

Today, the professional and amateur cultural productions are not that far from each other. Represented by the new media, the communication environment turns the individual himself into the main advertising platform, thus forming a C2C channel, along with the B2B and B2C ones. It is the consumer, endowed with the various possibilities to share his opinion on goods and services with many others, who becomes the main distributor of the marketing communications (Karyakina, 2010).

While we also start seeing the emerging trend of digital B2B2C channel, especially among the international corporations in Russia, where the producing companies involve their trade partners into the digital communication with them and the consumers. They use this channel

to appoint the tasks, control the execution and measure the trade results, including the retail advocacy programs for consumers.

3.5. Content: personalization and visualization

Content in all its manifestations is one of the most important means by which the companies attract the users. Today, in the era of the informational abundance, we observe the growing importance of the quality content, the active monetization of the content in the digital medium, and a search of the new distribution channels. Communicational media depend on the content generators as well as consumers. In many ways, the advertising (along with music) has shaped the video-clip culture of modern audio-visual creativity. This means that the media content is blended into the 30-second advertising messages that harmoniously alternate with equally brief informational or entertaining clips (Karyakina, 2010).

AKAR and IAB Russia analyse the sub-segment of online video based on the measurement of the in-stream advertising. This sub-segment includes the budgets of video advertising of online cinema and websites of the TV companies, of video hosting as well as of licensed players in social media. The video advertising is the quickly growing instrument of the interactive advertising. More than 75% of surveyed companies use the different types of interactive video (traditional and mobile one). Among the companies using the digital video, the 42% allocate the separate budgets, while the 22% do not divide the budget between the interactive video and TV (IAB Barometer , 2018).

3.6. Installing the digital technologies into the classical media

The digital drivers greatly affect other segments of the advertising pie, installing the elements of the digitalization. If one regards the Internet as a technological platform, then, in a certain percentage, all media today are presented in digital formats. That is why there is a tangible need of a joint-effort reconsideration by the advertising community of the existing classification of the media-segments.

In regards to the television, the air channels continue to dominate as the sources of the global income from the TV advertising. However, with the ongoing growth of the paid television and the online TV advertising, these segments might slowly win the dominance. In the developing markets, including Russia, they are notably leaning towards the digitization and an outflow of viewers because of smartphones and tablets. In tele viewing, Russia takes its own course. The main feature is that the high quality air television is free. That is why the per-day number of traditional media-consuming hours has not decreased; on the contrary, it has increased with the additional content viewing online. The choice of the content today depends on the viewer's desire rather than the broadcast schedule. This is happening thanks to so-called non-linear viewing set-ups, including the various on-demand video providing services. Content is also accessible via search engines.

Meanwhile the Russian holdings are taking their own route to business transformation: actively developing the sites of their stations and online portals, work on new formats and experiment with new technologies: audio advertising online targeting, implementing new analytics instruments, creating new online and offline formats.

The received data can be used to launch the advertising campaigns in Internet where the users' interest is piqued in several minutes after viewing a video. Even the traditional outdoor

advertising employs the digital technologies to adapt to different users, contexts, and environments (Mutom, 2017). The digital OOH (Out Of Home) is the key component for the growth of outdoor advertising, while the market of traditional media in this segment remains stable. This branch is currently in the stage of actively transferring to digital formats.

We should not overlook the digital changes in print press and the move of numerous publishers to online format. As noticed the advertising investments in press are the most susceptible to reductions during the periods of economic instability. The television and radio prove to be somewhat more resilient in times of structural transformations compared to the printed media (Zhigunova, 2017), although there are the serious reasons to believe this occurs due to the format of the media rather than the overall market trend.

4. Conclusions

The conclusions concern the various aspects of the impact of digital drivers on the communication market and its main segments.

1. The study demonstrates the modern state of communication industry in Russia and its digital market after the crisis caused by the economic instability of 2014-2015, as well as the difficulties brought by the economic sanctions.

The market manifested the rapid and stable growth of the client activity and the development of the market's infrastructure.

While the relations between the advertisers and the communications agencies require the new management approaches. The medium-sized and large companies, as locomotives of these changes, enrolled into digital interaction with partners as well as began to implement the digital solutions to increase the efficiency of businesses.

2. **The digital drivers represent the most sought-after and rapidly multiplying points of contact between the consumers and brands.** Brand communicators must re-evaluate their traditional relations with customers, allowing the latter to choose the format of communication by themselves. This implies an even deeper integration of all the technologies employed in branding in order to better understand and serve the audience.

However, the digital instruments have to include the strategic integrated approaches in branding and promotion, the ability to see the picture in its entirety, applying the "scanner" analytics to all activities and, as a result, working out a complex development strategy.

3. The new technologies can be used both in favour of the advertisers as well as against them, concealing the true paid advertising coverage and discrediting the digital communications. In order to ensure the stable development of the advertising industry **in absence of clear control systems, the advertising management should conduct the policy of openness towards the clients and improve the evaluation instruments**, which will allow controlling the targeted application of the clients' budgets.

Today, the consumers become the active generators of the content. This means, **the brands will have to forego the editing and the censure.** The communication should not look staged, it should occur in real time, in formats-live programs, streaming, comments, etc.

In the near future, the main social networks will focus on paid content as never before. While even the paid participation does not automatically solve the problem of severe competition: **the advertisers should pay attention to the quality of their content and its individualization** while employing the new platforms to expand their presence, searching for a target segment among the niche audiences, and launching the innovative products.

One of main tasks for the future is preparation of the managers and marketers, who will be ready to interact with the better-informed and technically equipped consumers, use technologies that are more complex and continuously raise their competence, primarily in the field of technology.

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