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## THE MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS IN THE CONSUMERS' STRATEGIES

**A b s t r a c t:** The identifications of consumers' decision-making patterns is a crucial issue for marketing-oriented companies that strive for bringing innovations successfully to the market and for developing their offer - this is the absolute truth. To better understand consumer behaviours it is worth to consider clients as a business partners, that have their missions, visions and pursue their strategies. Following this assumption, the purpose of the article is to present an idea of defining consumers as a market entities and explain their behaviour in the light of the theory of management. The author of this paper uses literature review as a method to describe basic issues, which are both: the mission & vision statement of the consumer as first of them and the strategy as the second one.

**K e y w o r d s:** consumer behaviour, decision-making process, mission and vision, strategy.

**K l a s y f i k a c j a J E L:** L26; M31.

### INTRODUCTION

The subject of this article is connected with the need to look at the market as a set of entities operating on it, which remain in relations with other market participants and make decisions leading to transactions. In this sense, market players are producers, suppliers, distributors and other organizations, as well as consumers. The theory refers to the organization strategy very broadly on the one hand and to the behaviour of individual consumers on the other, similarly describing the structure of the decision process itself [Bolesta – Kukuła, 2003, p. 151; Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 2001, p. 249; Rudnicki, 2000, p. 229].

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Assuming that a consumer is a person who satisfies their needs with products available on the market, we come to the conclusion that each person is a consumer from their birth. However, it is difficult to talk about a newborn human being as a market entity. They can not express their preferences, are not able to make decisions on their own and have a significantly limited influence on the ways of satisfying their needs. Such a consumer is rather an element of a specific organization, which is a household. In the light of the Polish law, a consumer can be defined as a “natural person making a legal transaction with an entrepreneur not directly related to its business or professional activity.” [Article 22 ‘of the Act of 23 April 1964 - Kodeks cywilny, Dz. U. z 2014r.]. At the same time, in the Civil Code, it is explained that although every person has legal capacity from the moment of birth, they do not have legal capacity until they reach the age of 13. The full legal capacity is obtained at the age of 18 year. [Article 8 of the Act of 23 April 1964 Kodeks cywilny, Dz. U. z 2014r].

Summarizing all the approaches mentioned above, it can be assumed that a person is a consumer (user) from birth, however, the market entity (consumer in the light of law) becomes only at the age of 13, though without full legal capacity associated with market transactions. The fullness of such abilities is gained upon reaching the age of majority and accepting to a large extent the functions of not only the user, but also the buyer, payer or decision-maker.

A mission, a vision and a strategy are basic parameters describing the conduct of enterprises (i.e. people in institutional conditions). At the same time, these parameters are not used to describe consumers behaviours. Such a case occurs probably due to the fact that organizations assign greater rationalism to making decisions, than individual buyers do, but when analyzing the behaviour of individuals we can see a certain coherence and predictability, which may indicate the existence of something like a consumer strategy. Thus, moving the considerations about the functioning of the organization to the conducts of individual consumers, the analogy of the mission-vision-strategy set, mentioned in the title of this article, seems evident. The understanding of consumers and their decision-making processes is one of the most important issues of management theory and at the same time a significant problem for practitioners [Liczmańska, 2016, p. 79]. One of the attempts to explain consumer decision-making reasons may be an approach in which they are treated as market players, having a mission, vision and following a certain, more or less specified strategy.

## 1. WHAT DOES CONSUMER'S MISSION STATEMENT CONCERN?

Mission statement is a task with a high degree of importance, including the responsibility for its implementation. The question about the enterprise's mission

is already at the moment of starting a business. When formulating a mission, a statement is expressed in which the essence of the operation of organization is stated, i.e. principally who it is and what it does [Stallworth Williams, 2008, p. 96], but also the reason for being, i.e. what is the purpose of its existence, what needs it satisfies, who is the beneficiary of its activity and what values make it stand out from other entities [Antoszkiewicz, 2007, p. 25]. Each enterprise should be aware of such basic issues for its existence, but in practice some of them function only on the basis of the intuitive sense of the mission or without referring to it in practice [Stallworth Williams, 2008, p. 100].

Consequences of the lack of a verbal directional goal in the form discussed here may be revealed in the area of communication with the environment and acquiring understanding of other market participants (including clients) for their own decisions, but also in an intra-organizational environment, in formulating strategy, ensuring consistency of goals and means of their implementation, the consequences of operation, work atmosphere and motivation in achieving set goals as well as adaptation of new employees.

It seems that the issue of the mission takes on a slightly different character in relation to the consumer as an economic entity. Małysa-Kaleta defines the mission of the contemporary consumer, approaching the issue from the idealistic perspective, as a conscious and rational satisfaction of consumer needs, i.e. at such a level and with such a structure that it takes place in accordance with the consumer's own preferences, their aspirations, and for the natural environment in which they operate, and also for the sake of the development of future generations [Małysa-Kaleta, 2009, p. 209].

This is a holistic approach, treating consumers as a party in the market arena and pointing out that the basic essence of their existence (as opposed to the supply side) is to satisfy needs, at the same time assigning them responsibility for the conditions of functioning of subsequent generations. However, the mission formulated in such a way does not accentuate differences between individuals. Going down to a deeper level and concentrating on a single consumer, the mission should be connected with the human consciousness in terms of one's own identity, value and potential [Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 45]. The questions posed by growing up and becoming a market participant will concern the system of values and the related hierarchy of needs in a strategic (and not short-term) context, but also the preferred ways of satisfying them. One can therefore find an analogy to the company's mission statement, although it will certainly not be precise in most cases. A consumer intuitively senses their mission rather than formulating it, (in comparison as to how it happens in the case of an organization, although we can also indicate cases in which companies are those that have not verbalized the meaning of their existence and have not set a clear direction in which they are heading.

In a sense, the evidence for the existence of the consumer's mission statement can be found in numerous theories of motivation. Assuming that motivation is a certain state of consciousness affecting readiness to take action [Falkowski and Tyszka, 2009, p. 103], orienting them within the needs and value system, we can say that it is the pillar of the consumer's mission. The consumers give meanings to their actions, however, at least three categories of motivation should be distinguished, which smoothly (continuously) differentiate the advancement of the consumer mission statement: social responsibility, responsibility for relatives and individual needs.

The various levels of mission advancement refer to the theory of motivation proposed by Clayton Alderfer, according to which there are three levels of needs: Existence needs, Relatedness needs and Growth needs (ERG) [Griffin, 2000, p. 463-464]. The existence needs seem to be the most natural, hence they will be part of every consumer's motivation to the extent that they can at least function/live. However, we can imagine a man who focuses primarily on the sphere of existence. Then his/her mission statement will be dominated by motivations about this very character. Even if a person feels a need from the category of interpersonal relations or development, but it will concentrate on his/her own satisfaction without taking into account the interests of other individuals, this mission can be described as the least advanced, the simplest one. Its core will be egoism. Referring to the theory of Abraham Maslow, these will be the needs which satisfaction determines the proper functioning of the individual (physiological, safety) but also of a higher level, such as love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization [Maslow, 2006, p. 62], however, focusing only on the good of the individual. Mission statement is defined here by an egoistic and snobbish approach, in which the consumer makes all decisions with himself/herself in mind, providing optimal conditions of life and development in a given situation.

A higher level of advancement of the mission statement means assigning responsibility for a family, friends, whose needs are becoming determinant of consumer activities (level of social relations according to Alderfer). It can be hypothesized that this is the most popular level of advancement of consumer mission statement. People need acceptance, but they are aware that they have to work on it by building appropriate relationships with others [Rogers, 1980, p. 90], caring for their closest relatives and further companions of life.

In turn, at the highest, most advanced level, the mission statement reflects the social responsibility of the consumer, including humanitarianism, ecology, but also religious ethics. Here, again, we could refer to the needs of development and self-realization (both in Maslow and Alderfer) and even to the category of transcendence needs that Abraham Maslow devoted more attention to later stages of his scientific work, indicating that some individuals have the ability to

define the purpose of its existence in terms of the general good [Venter and Venter, 2010, p. 29].

## 2. HOW TO DEFINE CONSUMER'S VISION?

The vision statement is defined as a desirable and therefore inspiring [Knecht, 2005, p. 42] image of the enterprise in the distant future [Obłój, 1998, p. 235], defining the direction of all activities [Jeżak, 2004, p. 113] undertaken by the management, employees and all persons in some organization-related manner [Davis, 2007, p. 61].

Until reaching a certain decision-making independence, the embryonic phase of the clients can be taken into account. Their personalities and attitudes are being shaped. At this moment, people discover their potential, shape their self-esteem and uniqueness, and thus formulates the mission of their existence. At the same time, they discover and learn the world around them, build dreams and ideas about who they want to be in the future, setting their vision statement, which - analogically to the organization's vision - will be their imagination of the ideal future, the goal, which they should strive to and which they should take into account while making decisions (including market decisions). All the things they will invest to (science, culture, travel, etc.), foster and direct their development. Depends on how they care for their physical condition (nutrition, sport, medicine, etc.) and many other decisions they make, will bring them closer to or far away from the designated, desirable state. Having a precise vision allows us to focus our attention on the right direction.

A vision statement is an effect of searching for the meaning of life for a human being, just in a similar way to an enterprise [Brilman, 2002, p. 81]. Vision can be built in relation to various spheres of life - both professional and personal, reflecting real human dreams. Of course, operating in conditions of uncertainty and risk, in a changing environment, both the consumer [Zimbardo, 1999, p. 422] and the enterprise [Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 2001, p. 246] (simply all market entities) subjectively assessing perspectives and options to choose, referring to knowledge and intuition, make more or less accurate decisions at a certain moment. However, the lack of direction (vision) limits their motivational processes in a long run. For enterprises it means stagnation, is one of the most important endogenous causes of the management crisis [Marek and Białasiewicz, 2011, p. 347-348], for a human being it may mean concentration on the needs of a lower level, lack of motivation for development.

### 3. HOW TO UNDERSTAND CONSUMER'S STRATEGIES

While the vision statement reflects ambitions, the mission is a statement about the sense of existence of a given entity. Both constructs are a starting point for formulating a long-term action plan, fulfilling a directional role. The concept of a strategy can be quite simply referred to the timeline putting between the mission and the vision of the organization. In this approach, strategy plays the role of running the market entity with its special market mission statement to the state defined by it as final and perfect.

The strategy refers to a long period and takes into account changes in the internal and external environment [Sudoł, 2006, p. 241]. It is an action program [Romanowska, 2009, p. 16], the art of making choices at given resources [Obłój, 2007, p. 1]. In the most general terms, we can assume a three-part strategy structure that includes: goals, resources and methods. By adopting the perspective of the consumer, the mission and vision discussed above helps in setting specific goals of the strategy. Also interesting in the case of consumer strategy is the issue of resources. The resources available to the consumer allow him or her to approach the goal. These are both economic resources as well as knowledge, education and skills in which the consumer invests and develops on the way to achieve the vision state, but also experience and components of their attitude [Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 11]. Resources, in turn, determine the choices of how to achieve strategic and tactical and operational goals. The methods of operation are the last element of the strategy structure here. The ways of achieving the set goals of the consumer strategy can be considered in the aspect of meeting current needs directly through shopping and consumption, according to the lifestyle and vision statement, but also in the indirect behavior, i.e. those that support meeting long-term needs, usually of a higher level, e.g. in the area of development of knowledge, skills [Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 7].

However, a question about the popularity of strategies in consumer behaviour arises here. It should be assumed here that part of the consumers are focused on success (defined freely, according to the individual system of values), they show determination and consistency. Those consumers follow their strategy of life and at the same time make strict targeted purchase decisions.

Recognizing the strategic goals of consumers and carrying out market segmentation according to them, firms can offer their customers a set of products that support consumers in their drive for their visions.

### SUMMARY

Man has a certain potential and value system (mission) and wants to achieve something in life (vision). For this purpose, a plan (strategy), which takes into account the decision-making related to meeting needs, is created. Transactions

with other players in the market should promote the vision of the assumptions relating to the mission. Mission is the boundary conditions for consumer decisions, while the vision is the final destination.

Learning and gaining experience will result in the correction of mission and vision. The young consumer is like a small enterprise, which is able to give the right direction to its functioning only after entering the market, and then, learning and gaining experience, finding out new opportunities, improves his/her vision.

It seems that getting to know the company's mission and vision and segmentation based on such parameters open new possibilities for creating comprehensive offers for clients, offers that take into account not only current behavior and current characteristics, but above all the direction of their evolution. By creating support for targeted capacity building, producers can support consumers, and as operators operating on the market, they will be able to make consistent decisions leading to the implementation of their vision.

It seems that the knowledge of the mission and vision and segmentation of consumers based on such parameters, opening up new possibilities for creating a comprehensive marketing offers that take into account not only the current behavior, but above all, the direction of their evolution.

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## MISJA I WIZJA W STRATEGIACH KONSUMENTÓW

**Z a r y s t r e ś c i:** Oczywiście jest, że identyfikacja wzorców decyzyjnych konsumentów jest kluczową kwestią dla firm zorientowanych marketingowo, które starają się wprowadzać innowacje na rynek i rozwijać swoją ofertę. Aby lepiej zrozumieć zachowania konsumenckie, warto rozważyć traktowanie klientów jako partnerów biznesowych, którzy mają swoje misje, wizje i realizują swoje strategie. Zgodnie z tym założeniem, celem artykułu jest próba spojrzenia na konsumentów jako na podmioty rynkowe i wyjaśnienie ich zachowania w świetle teorii zarządzania organizacją. Autor niniejszego artykułu wykorzystuje przegląd literatury jako metodę opisaną podstawowych zagadnień, które dotyczą deklaracji misji i wizji konsumenta oraz formułowania strategii.

**S ł o w a k l u c z o w e:** zachowania konsumentów, process decyzyjny, misja, wizja i startegia