

SAPTAMANA FINANCIARA

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LOHAS values integrated in communication

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Recent climate changes led to the development of a new market, called LOHAS. This growing market is about to change the companies' communication way by 180 degrees. We may say that the capitalism is currently at a critical point, which is to be exceeded only by those brands recognising and integrating the new LOHAS values.

The New York Times has described LOHAS as "the biggest market you have ever heard of" and for which spectacular growths are expected for the following 10 years. LOHAS – which stands for Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability, is a term which designates a market segment with extremely wide and rapid growth. This market is mainly focused on four different areas – health (healthy lifestyles), environment (ecology, ecological lifestyles), personal development and sustainable.

A large number of industries have already included or are about to include these areas in their strategic plans. Here are some of the last-minute news related to the way in which brands adapt to the LOHAS market: „McDonald's coffee will be sustainable“, „Apple places solar cells in mobile phones and iPods“, „Nissan offer: carbon offsets with car purchase“, „Coca-Cola says goodbye to toxic fridges“, „Heinz targets 20% carbon footprint reduction by 2015“.

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LOHAS means more than a new market: it is a new culture. It is not coincidentally that the adepts of this movement are also called "cultural creatives". Indeed, whether they are producers or consumers, they create a new business culture, with a different life philosophy.

Another effect of the LOHAS market development is also the tendency of large brands to communicate through platforms combating consumerism, promoting measurement, balance, personal experience and spiritual life before material life. "Experience" has been the word order of marketing for some time. This may seem paradoxical, but it has become a requirement for profit gain.

„The integration of LOHAS values is not only a form of altruism, but also a business-related necessity. Those who want to make profit should think in LOHAS terms, as the consumers' trust is more and more based on these values“, declares Silvia Bucur, General Manager PRAIS Corporate Communications.

LOHAS communication

Both LOHAS producers and consumers have a holistic view on the product/service. In other words, the product is not judged only by means of its qualities and the immediate needs it can meet, but it is also seen in relation to its effects on the health, environment, in perspective and interdependency with the other LOHAS values.

„LOHAS consumer looks beyond the products and services, searching to find out what lies behind them, from the philosophy, practice and people of various organizations to their impact on the planet, assessing from this perspective the gesture of buying a certain product or service.

LOHAS consumers want to know “where does it come from?”, “who produced it?”, “what is it packaged in?” and “what will happen when I dispose of it?”, explains Silvia Bucur.

New consumers' expectations

Communication industry needs to assimilate the new philosophy and find the means to convey it. PRAIS has recently launched “The LOHAS initiative”: a complete range of PR and strategic marketing services aimed at promoting the market of products and services provided through economically sustainable and environmental friendly business practices .

All recent studies show that marketing and communication need to change their coordinates fast. Recently, Havas Media published a survey on how the consumers from various countries perceive global warming. The majority of them believe that the responsibility regarding the fight against global warming should belong to the companies, as the governments are not able to take efficient measures. The survey proves that the responsibility gap concerning the environment is an opportunity for the companies. 89% of the respondents said they preferred the products of the companies which took measures to reduce the impact on the environment. Surprising about the survey was that the people from the developing countries were more concerned about the environmental issues than those from developed countries.

Last month, KPMG published a survey called „Climate changes change your business“, designating six major areas affected by climate change risks. The risks they are exposed to include also those related to the reputation, and the loss of the reputation may be caused by irresponsible resources use. It is obvious that in order to survive, these companies have to integrate the LOHAS values, from purchasing the raw materials to their recycling and reintegration in nature. This approach needs to be communicated sustainably, as people are expecting the companies to act.

Business for Social Responsibility (BSR) and Forum For the Future have conducted the research „Eco-Promising: Communicating the Environmental Credentials of Your Products and Services“. In addition to the analysis of the companies' advantages by communicating commitments to the environment, the report presents also a practical guide for the firms which make eco-promises. Among other things, they should know the real impact of the products they manufacture, make promises only based on a wider environmental program, involve the consumers and encourage them to protect the environment.

These are just some of the LOHAS values and they are obviously the future of the business-making. The unbearable heat, the storms, drought, floods affect our health and lifestyle. It is not a matter of future concerns any more. The choice of products is more responsible because we are already personally feeling the consequences of environmental damages because of the companies.

Healthy lifestyle in product communication

LOHAS market is also developing in Romania, and the companies have started to communicate based on the LOHAS values. The references to health, lifestyle, and lately, environment are already very frequent. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle is seen in each and every product or service, not only those from the food industry. On Saturday, the traffic on Kiseleff Boulevard, between Antipa Museum and Casa Doina Restaurant, was restricted for a few hours, in order to develop the event entitled „Free traffic for children“, organized by Jetix. The event aimed to promote a healthy lifestyle, through a fun mix of music, comedy and tales. Another example is the “Champions for life” campaign launched by Radio Itsy Bitsy, aiming to promote a healthy lifestyle through sport. These promotion alternatives are already common events. A month ago, the first Romanian association of eco-consumers was established. Initiatives were taken in the construction market to set up a council of green buildings, while the Romanian Parliament will become a “green building”. And this is not only a matter of marketing tricks, but a need that can no longer be postponed. The increase in energy costs, the compulsoriness to assess the energetic efficiency of buildings imposes the development of green constructions market.

„We appreciated that this is the right moment to launch the PRAIS LOHAS initiative. New synergies need to be created between the companies and the consumers, to support the economic volatile environment of this century. We are facing realities related to energy costs, climate changes, food crisis, people want to improve the health condition of the populations, to provide them with access to education, personal development and culture, to develop new energy sources and environmental friendly industries. Being careful is not only a catchy phrase, but also an attitude!, declared Silvia Bucur.