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How to adapt a strategy of communication to the needs of older adults? – Integrated model of communications

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How to adapt a strategy of communications to the needs of older adults? – Integrated model of communications

Abstract

The aim of the paper is to explain how elements of model of marketing communications could be modified in case of older adults. The trend of aging societies and development of innovative technologies of communication forced companies to re-think strategies of communication and means which are used to reach the target group. The authors concentrated on the explanation how the phenomenon of aging forced marketers to modify some elements of strategies of communications, on the examples of selected communications tools from different sectors – cosmetics and pharmaceutical industry.

Literature studies as well as an analysis of selected advertising messages are aimed to indicate a successful method of communicating with the segment of older adults. The examples used in this study belong to the selected industries, which are increasingly active in communication with the older generation. These are: the cosmetics and the pharmaceutical industries.

Key words: innovations in communication, older adults, integrated communications means

Introduction

In recent years marketing communication has acquired a new meaning, as nowadays consumers have a constant access to information, due to, among others, the development and the dissemination of communications technologies. However, the ubiquity and the large number of marketing messages make it increasingly difficult for consumers to focus on one particular message and to assess its usefulness. The inevitable informational noise disturbs the process of decoding messages. Moreover, there is the question of the choice of communication channels. It poses a considerable challenge for people working on strategies of communications with consumers, as their needs are becoming more and more diverse and, consequently, reaching them requires an individual approach and a personalized message. As it turns out, the segments which have been considered homogeneous so far, e.g. older adults, in reality are far from that. Due to the financial limitations on the one hand, and the diversification of methods of reaching the target market on the other, it is necessary for companies to diligently select the means and the channels of communication. There is also an increasing need for their integration and coordination, with a view to conveying an unambiguous and concise message, as well as a need for selecting appropriate channels, in order to achieve the highest effectiveness of communication.

The article focuses on the modifications in the means of communication, aimed at making the offer more acceptable for the generation with age-related limitations. The following sequence of issues has been assumed for the study. First, the Shannon-Weaver model of communication is referred to, with the description of its elements and their correlations. Then the older adults generation is defined. Next, the modifications and recommendations related to marketing communication are presented, with the purpose of making the information about the offer, both in the sense of the communication channels and the form and the content of the message, accessible to the market segment with specific predispositions. Particular attention is

paid to advertising, due to the fact that the target group in question spends relatively much time watching TV programs.

The model of marketing communication - review of literature

In literature there are a number of models of communication, which describe the process of conveying information (Wanat 2010, Wiktor 2001). This study focuses on the micromodel of the communication process created by Schramm (1955) and applied in contemporary models of mass communication (Kotler and Keller 2014; Hill 2009, Clow and Baack 2007). This model consists of the following elements: the sender, the encoding, the message, the decoding, the recipient, the feedback and the distortion. Particular elements must be configured in the way which will allow for reaching the selected segment most effectively. This entails a necessity of considering such issues as: the content and the way of encoding the message, the form of the message (a text, an image, a sound), the place, the time and the communication channel. The Schramm model is the basic concept of the process of communication with the market, in which a company tries to answer the questions about the purpose of the message, its recipient, the manner and the frequency of transmission, the feedback it will bring, and, finally, its effectiveness (Kotler 2005). Communication can take place only on the following conditions (Falkowski and Tyszka 2001):

- the information is conveyed in the language understood by both parties;
- there is an effective information medium;
- the message is not distorted by external factors (so-called noises);
- the message is received;
- on the assumption that the message is targeted at a particular recipient.

The segment of older adults has specific characteristics which pose new challenges for communication managers.

The segment of older adults as a target group for communication activities

One of the key elements of successful communication is the identification of the characteristics of the target market, the recipient of the messages, in order to maximize the effectiveness of communication (remembering, enhancing the image, or stimulating the recipient to take an action). This study concentrates on the segment of older adults, for a few reasons. Firstly, the tendencies which can be observed in European countries justify an expectation that in the further decades this group will have a growing share in the population of the developed countries. As statistics show, in 2014 the share of people over 65 in the EU was 18.5%, whereas in Poland it was 14%. However, Poland is the fastest aging country of the European Union. Regarding the highest share of persons aged 65 or older in the total population, Italy (21.4 %) and Germany (20.8 %) are the leaders, while Ireland had the lowest proportion (12.6 %) (www.eurostat.com). Forecasts suggest that by 2080 for 28 present EU members the share of senior citizens will reach the level of nearly 29% of the population. As for Poland, it has been estimated that by 2035 the share of the elderly will amount to 23% of the population (www.eurostat.com). That is why the „senior-oriented” so-called silver economy, understood as a system of products and services addressed to older adults, is growing in significance.

Secondly, in spite of the growing share and significance of this market segment, still a large part of promotional budgets in companies is designed for communication with persons under the age of 50 (Yoon, Lee and Danzinger, 2007). Marketing and advertising campaigns in recent decades have been focused on young consumers because the elderly or the senior citizen segment was stereotyped as a unique segment of low net-worth individuals dependent on their children's income (Dwight and Urman, 1985).

Thirdly, this segment is becoming increasingly different from the generations of senior citizens 20 years ago. For example, there is an interesting phenomenon related to the 65+ generation, which can be defined as the change of social roles (Schewe and Balazs, 1992). Previously, people at the age of 60+ or 65+ ended their professional careers and got more involved in family matters, mainly by taking care of their grandchildren. However, at present their better physical condition allows them for undertaking tasks which were previously reserved for younger generations. Moreover, the falling number of births and late motherhood mean that many persons over 60+ do not undertake the role of their grandchildren's caretakers. Additionally, there is a growing number of active senior citizens, who are keen to pursue their own interests, instead of merely helping their families. The phase of developing their own interests begins somewhat earlier, after the youngest child leaves home. What is more, as research shows, the empty nesters, for instance, focus their buying more on services than things. They crave "experiences" over tangible goods (Wolfe, 1990). After the end of their career, at 60, or, more often, at 65, they show a growing interest in travel, education, health services, also volunteering. In the first years of their retirement, some retirees take new jobs, which are not necessarily a continuation of their previous professional experience.

The features of the segment of older adults described above are the reason why communication managers should more diligently identify this group's needs and formulate marketing messages. Nevertheless, before offering recommendations as to how to communicate with this social group, it is worthwhile to point out that although the term 'a senior' is commonly understood, it is not precisely defined in literature. It is commonly accepted that this term refers to persons over the age 65. However, these people may differ both in their state of health and in their physical and intellectual fitness (Meiners and Seeberger 2010). In literature there is a division of the group of seniors into three subgroups: (young old – 65-75, old-old 75-85, and the oldest – over 85). This division is justified in the light of the differences in the condition of persons who are 15-20 years apart. Moreover, the older a consumer, the stronger is the influence of their caretakers on the decisions about the purchase of products or services. The description of the group of older adults should be complemented with the following characteristics: feminization (this group is dominated by women), singularisation (one-person households, mainly represented by women), a higher concentration of senior citizens, especially those over 80, in cities, as well as the spatial differentiation of the aging process (The Report on the Situation of Elderly Persons in Poland 2012). It should be emphasized that persons 65+ may differ in some respects in different countries, therefore the segment is defined on the basis of psychographic or behavioral aspects, rather than mere age. There are numerous examples of the segmentation of seniors based on these criteria (Meiner and Seeberger 2010). A significant basis of segmentation from the point of view of communication are cognitive abilities, however they may have an individual dimension, unrelated to the other segmentation criteria, which may cause problems with the selection of means of communication and their excessive individualization.

Effects of ageing on customers

Although ageing can be understood in different ways, it has specific consequences for a person's standard of living and for their environment. From the biological point of view, ageing involves deterioration of many skills, lowered cognitive abilities and, in many cases, inhibited communication with the environment. Functioning of senses – sight, hearing - is also deteriorating. There are also other biological changes (Table 1). Over time, the majority of ageing persons also experience weakening of intellectual capabilities and memory. These changes lead to the seniors' higher dependence on other people's help. However, in spite of the limitations, contemporary seniors are characterized by a generally higher level of knowledge,

higher income, a higher share of educated people than in previous decades, higher concern with health and more conscious consumption.

Table 1. Changes in the anthropometric features caused by aging

Physical characteristic	Change
Height	Lower
Weight	Often higher
Skin tension	Lower
Hair	Greying
Teeth	Weaker
Sight	Weaker
Hearing	Weaker
Physical fitness	Weaker
Musculature	Lower
Chest size	Lower
Bones density	Lower
Length and width of ears	Bigger
Mobility	Lower

Source: based on: C. D. Schewe,(1988)

As a result, the present elderly people care about their physical condition more than their counterparts 20-30 years ago, as they aim to maintain a good health which ensures them independence. Thanks to this attitude, they are more open to products and services which will help them achieve this goal.

It is worthy to mention, that all problems connected with aging influence also shopping behavior patterns and decisions where to buy products and services (Frackiewicz, Grzesiuk, Bilińska-Reformat 2016). Seniors prefer stores located close to the place of living, but also due to lower income they are oriented on shopping in discount stores. Other interesting trend observed nowadays is connected with buying via Internet. According to some statistics in 2015 25% of seniors bought products by Internet, in Great Britain it was much more 60% (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do> [access: 18.05.2016]). But in case of online shopping, as Reisenwitz, Iyer, Kuhlmeier and Eastman (2007) noticed, seniors with higher levels of nostalgia proneness used and accessed the internet less, purchased less online, had less online experience and felt less comfortable using the internet.

From the psychological point of view, surveys conducted among persons 65+ by many researchers allowed for formulating a few interesting conclusions, included in Table 2. Old age is a period characterized also by reduced self-esteem (Loroz 2004). Therefore, the elderly are more likely than other age groups to fall prey to fraudulent and unethical marketing practices. There is evidence for an increase in the incidence of scams and questionable marketing tactics targeting older consumers (AARP Foundation, 2003). What is also important for communication process, older adults have higher cognitive abilities in the morning than in the afternoon.

One may find few examples of typical mistakes in communicating with older consumers (Niezgoda and Jerzyk 2013). They rely on showing smiling retirees strolling around nursing homes, exploitation of young actors in commercials to play roles of old men, confuse style of youth in advertising messages with a young well-being (where the desired message was a young state of mind senior). Older consumers prefer descriptive way in which information and communication is presented. It should also be remembered that in older segments increases media consumption. Seniors spend a considerable amount of time watching television and listening to the radio, which, combined with weakening social relations, media creates the most important source of information and a substitute contact with the environment.

Table 2. Perception of messages by older adults

Author(s)	Conclusions
A.K. Thomas	Persons 65+ who had been told that they could obtain the same results as younger people achieved better results in remembering than those respondents over 65 who had been told that the result depended on age.
T. Bennett, J. Gaines	Seniors are afraid of the negative stereotypes about them and try to avoid them. They tend to accept problems, such as pain or sleeping disorders, as natural states. Older adults' fear of stereotypes results in fulfilling them, for example by lower effectiveness on memory tests. The authors suggest that negative stereotypes can be countered by positive strengthening, through e.g. a positive image, or a training.
M. M. Donlon, O. Ashman, B. R. Levy	Higher exposure of older adults to television strengthens their negative views on ageing. On the other hand, in this way they may raise their awareness of negative stereotypes and thus become more immune to them. The findings suggest that promotion of awareness of stereotypes helps seniors confront their ageing.
D. Natvig	Residents of a residential home who learned from students show to use computers and bought the equipment in order to use the Internet had more topics for conversations, were proud of their achievements and new friends and their relations with the students teaching them were more friendly.
Yoon, C.	A growing body of research has shown that for many older adults, performance on cognitively taxing tasks peaks in the morning and declines in the afternoon and evening.
Yoon, C., M. P. Lee, S. Danziger,	Older adults tend to be morning types who reach their cognitive peak early in the day. Time of day therefore places a constraint on their ability to engage in effort-intensive and systematic processing. Consistent with this line of reasoning, it was found that at their optimal time of day (morning), older adults' attitudes toward the product were more favorable when the arguments contained within the advertisement were strong and cogent. This study demonstrates that older adults are best reached in the morning when the message requires thoughtful or detailed processing, and they are conversely best reached in the evening when the message is simple or consists of favorable peripheral cues.

Source: based on: <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/news/releases/how-we-create-false-memories-assessing-memory-performance-in-older-adults.html>

The study of communication with the segment of older adults would not be complete without mentioning stereotypes. Stereotypes about the elderly ingrained in the consciousness of their environment are the reason why there is a risk of using them automatically in communication. However, older individuals who perceive themselves as negatively stereotyped in television programming internalize these images (Glynn, 1987). Other studies indicate that those who are targets of negative stereotyping are diminished in the eyes of others and in their own self-esteem. There also is evidence that seniors who are heavy viewers of negatively stereotyped television programming are more likely to believe older people are close-minded, ineffective, and dull (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli and Morgan, 1980). Also the study of Robinson et al (2003) supports findings that stereotyping any generation or group of people may have potentially harmful side-effects. The authors believe marketers and their advertising agencies should be more concerned with the unintended effects of their advertising. The advertising industry needs to be just as concerned about its social esteem as it is about its selling effectiveness. In the long run, the two are related (Robinson, Popovich, Gustafson and Frases 2003).

Successful communication with older adults

Values

One of the key determinants of successful communication is the creation of an appropriate message. In order to communicate effectively, it is essential to identify the system of values of the target group and incorporate it into the context of the presented offer. The sender of the message should refer to the attributes and the benefits valued by the given segment, so as to achieve the segment's favorable attitude to the brand. These could be values

such as: family, respect, belonging, trust, responsibility, the high quality of the brand, or savings obtained thanks to buying products of this brand. The system of values is different for older persons than for younger participants of the market, due to such factors as: a different stage in the family life cycle, a different level of professional activity, or the earlier mentioned state of health. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that for the segment of older adults the real age may be different than the age with which its representatives identify themselves. Therefore, taking into account the real age of respondents in a survey conducted in the UK, the following ranking of values was obtained: the most important value to these older consumers is self-respect, next was security, warm relationships with others, and then a sense of accomplishment (Sudbury and Simcock 2009). Being well respected is the least important value. These results should be applied in positioning strategies and advertising themes based on these values, because they are more likely to be well received than are those that use the lower ranked values of a sense of belonging or being well respected. Those who have younger cognitive ages tend to place more importance on fun and enjoyment, and their cognitively older counterparts place greater importance on security. However, it is when the two variables of self-perceived age and values are integrated (Sudbury and Simcock 2009).

Content

A message promoting a given product or service is affected by the following elements: the text, the image, the sound, the channel of communication of the duration of the contact with the medium. Depending on the expected results, the content of the message should be limited or expanded. If the purpose is cognitive in nature, the text of the message is more detailed and based on rational arguments, with the aim of enhancing the knowledge and understanding of the brand. If the sender's objective is to arouse positive emotions, the image and the sound grow in significance, whereas the text is limited to the minimum. If the desired response is buying the product, the information focuses on the material benefits of taking the offer in the given time. In the case of older adults, it must be taken into account that their cognitive abilities are different than those of younger persons. What is more, their reception of an advertising message may be affected by stereotypes or prejudices which lower the seniors' self-esteem. If a message is addressed at older adults, such factors as the time of the exposure to the advertising medium should be taken into consideration, because the research findings quoted earlier show that seniors are more likely to get involved and to remember the advertising content, if they are exposed to it in the morning. In the afternoon they tend to apply cognitive schemes which facilitate the process of remembering and decoding. Moreover, a message will be better received if it does not rely on stereotypes, but uses positive stimuli – e.g. a belief in the same cognitive abilities of seniors and younger recipients.

A significant element of an advertising message is its exposure time. For instance, the time of exposure to a commercial is 15-30 seconds. It is difficult to present all the attributes and benefits offered by, e.g. pharmaceuticals, in such a short time, also taking into account the fact that the level of cognitive abilities and memory of persons over 65 is normally lower than that of younger recipients. It is equally difficult to point out any side-effects of the promoted products, which inevitably leads to the simplification of the message and, in effect, problems with its understanding. But so far television advertising of prescription drugs is the most common form of drug advertising (Brownfield, Bernhardt, Phan, Williams, and Parker 2004). However, as Brownfield and others point out in their research, the elderly persons had known the large part of the advertised medicines before the survey. In the case of the first contact with a commercial of an unknown medicine, remembering its application was weaker than for younger respondents.

Williams and Page (2011) show that information should be easily digestible, non-confrontational, and non-controversial. Marketers can reach older adults through traditional media: radio, television, billboards, magazines, and direct mail, also use face-to-face conversation, formal social events, recognition and tribute events, professional advisors, direct mail, telephone, and the Internet to contact this generation. Although earlier research findings pointed at press and television as the main channels of communication with the segment, the spread of the Internet access and the increasingly intuitive navigation of applications result in the growing significance of online communication with older adults. The authors (2011) indicate other desired forms of communication and the characteristics of messages to this group of consumers. Since this target group is becoming more and more interested in the Internet as a source of information and also in online shopping, there is a need to adapt the forms and the content of websites to this segment. Therefore, website designers should take into account the following rules (William and Page 2011):

- Make the text size at least 12 points by default and offer a button to increase text size for the site.
- Present information clearly and in a way that is easy to scan.
- Differentiate between text used for lining and text used for headings, that is, be consistent throughout the site.
- Use static navigational menus and avoid using moving menus.
- Make search results visible on the page without scrolling and if you use pop-up windows, make the default size big enough to fit all or most of the information so users do not need to scroll.
- When graphical elements appear close to a text link, make those elements part of the working link.
- In search results, always clearly repeat the user's query.

Another interesting point about online communication with older adults is made by Goodrich (2013). The findings of his study indicate that older adults pay bigger attention to online ads than younger adults do. Also he noticed, that purchase intention for older adults was greatest in the evening, when processing capabilities were the lowest and reliance on schemas was the highest. For marketers, this raises both opportunities and ethical issues. Direct marketing might be most effective toward older adults in the evening, when attention to ads and purchase intention is the highest (Goodrich 2013).

The above presented characteristics of people 65+ substantially affect the process of creating advertising messages. Another example of the adaptation of communication to the needs of the 65+ segment is the guide prepared by the International Council on Active Ageing (ICAA), which informs companies about what to focus on in communication with the 65+ generation, what mistakes to avoid and what characteristics of communication are recommended. The authors suggest using particular vocabulary and showing older adults in specific situations (Table 3).

The effectiveness of a message addressed at older adults can be enhanced by the selection of appropriate characters (models) who will appear in advertisements. Commercials for the segment of older adults most frequently show persons visually identified with this segment. Grey hair, wrinkled faces, or a specific type of clothes are intended to help the audience identify with the characters from the advertisements. As research shows, the person (model) appearing in an advertisement should have features typical for the target market for a given product or service. However, it does not necessarily mean that the age of the models must be the same as that of the target customers. It can be explained by the fact that most people feel younger than they really are (Underhill and Caldwell 1983). The discrepancy between the real

age and the perceived one can be a few years, depending on the seniors' country (Kohlbacher, Sudbury and Hofmeister 2011). Research conducted by Chevalier and Lichtlé (2012) confirms that the choice of a model appearing in an ad is essential, both for the image that the brand will have in the minds of the public and for the purchases that consumers intend to make. It is also important to take into account seniors' subjective age, in order to determine the age of the model to be cast in the ad. If the ad is intended to convey information, the presence of an older model is recommended to add credibility to the information content and strengthen the arguments of the message (Milliman and Erffmeyer 1990).

Table 3. Recommended and unacceptable forms used in communication with older adults

Words and phrases to avoid	Acceptable words and phrases
Anti-aging Aged Codger, geezer, and similar Grandmotherly "he looks good for his age" "despite her age..." "even older adults can..." "is active even at that age..."	Adults ages 60 and older People ages 55 and older People with dementia People in middle age Aging adults Midlife Older adults Older persons Older people Older patients Older population Prime time Experience, experienced Independent Mentor, coach
Words and phrases to use sparingly	Accepted words and phrases (but conditioned)
Golden, silver Golden agers The elderly (may be used for a group eg, concern for the elderly) Elderly (do not apply to an individual) Senior citizens Retiree (do not use as a noun; more accurate is "people who are retired") Middle age (do not use as a noun: more acceptable is "people in middle age") Third age (this term is not widely recognized)	Elder (respected term in some cultures, used for the older age groups) Frail, frailty (used and defined in research and government; inappropriate in other communication unless it is defined explicitly) Mature, maturity (may be perceived as old-fashioned and overly neutral) Baby boomer (people in this age cohort do not consider themselves babies)
	Image recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show older people across the full range of interests and functional abilities. Older adults represent many functional levels, abilities, socioeconomic and ethnic groups. Showing all of these in imagery is fair, as well as effective. • Portray people engaging in a range of behaviors, roles and activities. • Avoid portraying a person in a manner that implies ridicule, prejudice or a negative stereotype. Portray older adults in well-kept, contemporary and fashionable (as appropriate) clothing and eyeglasses

Source: ICAA's Guidelines for effective communication with older adults (2011)

Due to heuristic and schema-based processing later in the day by older adults, marketers should be aware, that especially in the afternoon they pay greater attention to pictures, phrases, and prominent displays. That is why they might be expected for older adults, as information cues.

An advertising message should be constructed in such a way that the recipient will accept the reality presented there. Therefore, it must rely on the norms and the attitudes which are commonly known and accepted in a given community (Kozłowska 2006). An advertising message must be a mere schematic simplification of the diverse reality. This is why, marketing communication uses stereotypes – easy to understand and acceptable ways of identifying particular groups and social roles, functioning in the public awareness. A stereotype allows for decoding a message in a correct way, without any special preparation.

Senders of marketing communication messages predominantly rely on four types of “silver” consumers:

- seniors playing the role of grandparents – caring, experienced and family-loving,
- active seniors, who, in spite of various health problems, are involved in physical activity (e.g. practicing Nordic walking), socially active and keen to maintain their fitness,
- attractive seniors, caring about their appearance, promoting elegance, style and maturity,
- seniors approaching the end of their lives, with physical and mental limitations, fearful about their close future.

Means of communications dedicated to older adults – examples from the pharmaceutical and cosmetics markets

Elderly people are naturally an attractive segment for the cosmetic and pharmaceutical industries. Senior women are the target for cosmetic companies offering anti-wrinkle, regenerating and rejuvenating products. The marketing message is based on the recommendations of well-known actresses from the older generation. Marketing campaigns of L’Oreal are examples of endorsement by international or local celebrities, (e.g. Jane Fonda, Catherine Deneuve, or Helen Mirren). Another brand – Estée Lauder – asked Karen Graham, its star model in the 1970s, to be the face of their new cream. In Poland Beata Tyszkiewicz promotes Dove. Advertising campaigns of cosmetics for the segment of female seniors usually show cheerful, well-dressed, good-looking women, whose attractive appearance is meant to encourage recipients to use the promoted products. The advertisement of L’Oreal cosmetics for mature men, Pierce Brosnan’s image was used.

The pharmaceutical industry offers a variety of products to persons 60+. These are both prescription medicines and those available without prescription. In the marketing communication with seniors as consumers of medical products there is one generally accepted scheme. Senior patients complain about various types of health problems, or have difficulties with functioning. After taking an appropriate medicine their problems disappear in a very short time. They feel much better and regain their good condition and good mood. They can practice sports, work in the garden, take care of their grandchildren, meet family and friends. The images of people of the similar age shown in advertisements addressed to older adults make the message more credible and comprehensible and encourage them to take action, at the same time raising the effectiveness of communication with this segment.

On the pharmaceutical market advertisements of formulations treating health problems typical for mature people, such as: arthritic pain, problems with blood circulation, digestion, mental fitness, or teeth, show both ordinary „average” seniors and well-known actors at advanced age (e.g. Opokan – a drug for arthritis is presented by ordinary users, who return to their normal activity thanks to this drug, whereas Ultrafastin – a pain-killing gel – is endorsed by W. Kozakiewicz – who used to be a famous sportsman. Celebrities (actors, sportspeople) are usually role-models, so the message presented by them becomes more credible. Advertisements of Buerlecitin and Vicard, which help retain the general good condition and

concentration ability, the images of both younger and older persons were used in an emotional message „give health to your loved ones” (Vicard). In an advertisement of a formulation for circulation problems for elderly people – Magne B6 Cardio – an adult daughter talks about her senior parents’ eventful life.

Abernathy and Adams-Price (2006) present interesting conclusions from research into the differences between remembering advertisements of medicines by older and younger people. They noticed that younger adults remember the purpose of drug advertisements (i.e., what condition the drug treats) better than older adults; also that both younger and older adults understand complex drug information included in the advertisements presented to them equally well. Moreover, a drug ad information is easier to understand when presented in the FAQ format, especially for older adults. Their findings show a way of constructing an advertisement with a view to effectively reaching older adults with its message.

Conclusions and limitations

The findings of the literature research presented above, as well as examples from the pharmaceutical and cosmetic markets allow for formulating a few conclusions. Firstly, the segment of older adults is not fully recognized yet from the point of view of communication. Despite the marketers’ growing interest in this segment, there are no comprehensive studies, which would facilitate effective communication with this group of consumers. Secondly, research conducted so far indicates that not only the form, or the content of the marketing message have impact on successful communication, but also the time of exposure to the message is of considerable significance. Moreover, due to the increasing role of the Internet communication, also online messages should be better adapted to the cognitive abilities of the representatives of the segment. The growing interest in online shopping gives companies an opportunity of defining the segment’s characteristics and developing their knowledge about it. This, in turn, will lead to a stronger individualization and personalization of communication with seniors. However, it should be emphasized that the segment of older adults may fall prey to unethical practices of some marketers, who might abuse the seniors’ trust, taking advantage of the fact that elderly persons are less immune to persuasive techniques than younger people.

As far as the limitations are concerned, it should be underlined that the article has the theoretical character. It has allowed for the identification of cognitive gaps in the model of communication with seniors, which should be the subject of further empirical studies. What needs to be empirically researched is the selection of the form and the content of the communication channels.

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