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**FORMS OF PROMOTION IN COMPUTER GAMES.
AN EXAMPLE OF SECOND LIFE**

**FORMY PROMOCJI W GRACH KOMPUTEROWYCH.
PRZYKŁAD GRY SECOND LIFE**

Abstract: Advertisers are faced with the choice of means of marketing communications. Messages that have an attractive form and are distributed by the popular source are more noticeable and are better remembered. The prevalence and ubiquity of traditional promotional instruments leads to seeking new forms of promotion. In recent years, the interest in promotion in the new medium of computer games has increased. This article is aimed to

present traditional and new promotional tools embedded in a virtual environment on the example of Second Life game. The reflections are based on a review of available Polish and foreign literature. In order to achieve the assumed goal, traditional and new promotional instruments are first characterized. Thereafter an examples of the use of these instruments in computer games are represented. The study is ended with final conclusions.

Keywords: forms of promotion, in-game promotion, Second Life

Streszczenie: Reklamodawcy stoją przed decyzją wyboru środków przekazu marketingowego. Komunikaty posiadające atrakcyjną formę i rozpowszechniane przez popularne źródło zwracają większą uwagę i są lepiej zapamiętywane. Powszechność i wszechobecność tradycyjnych instrumentów promocji prowadzi do poszukiwania nowych jej form. W ostatnich latach rośnie zainteresowanie promocją w nowym medium, jakim są gry komputerowe. Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu przedstawienie tradycyjnych oraz nowych instrumentów promocji osadzonych w wirtualnym środowisku na przykładzie gry Second Life. Rozważania oparte są na przeglądzie dostępnej literatury polskiej i zagranicznej. Aby zrealizować zamierzony cel, w pierwszej kolejności scharakteryzowane zostały tradycyjne oraz nowe instrumenty promocji. Następnie zostały przedstawione przykłady zastosowania tych instrumentów w grach komputerowych. Opracowanie jest zakończone wnioskami.

Słowa kluczowe: formy promocji, promocja w grach, Second Life

Introduction

The high intensity of advertising on television and the gradual increase in on-line advertising make computer games an attractive medium for marketing communication¹. Additionally, consumers learned how to avoid traditional advertising messages. Computer games are an another way to solve this problem². A specific feature of computer games is their interactivity, which focuses long-term customer attention³. Messages that have an attractive form and are distributed by the popular source are more noticeable and are better remembered⁴.

It can be observed the growing popularity of computer games based on strolling virtual worlds⁵. A virtual world is a stimulated by computer environment aimed for its users to inhabit and interact via avatars represented. This environment may operate similarly to real world with real-world rules, real-time actions and communica-

¹ M. Mitreġa, *Advergaming jako rozwijająca się forma komunikacji marketingowej*, „Studia Ekonomiczne” 2013, (140), p. 135.

² M. Lee, R. J. Faber, *Effects of product placement in on-line games on brand memory: A perspective of the limited-capacity model of attention*, „Journal of advertising” 2007, 36(4), p. 75.

³ M. Mitreġa, *Advergaming...*, p. 135.

⁴ P. Kotler, *Marketing*, Wydawnictwo Rebis, Poznań 2005, p. 582.

⁵ M. Hofman-Kohlmeyer, *Characterization of new business opportunities in virtual commerce*, „World Scientific News” 2017, 78, p. 182.

tions or depict a fantasy world. Last years, virtual worlds gain popularity and impact on people's communication⁶. This kind of games attracted meaningful numbers of companies which decided to use dose games on the commercial purposes⁷. There exist many virtual worlds but the most common example is Second Life.

Marketing literature investigated virtual worlds as virtual marketplace, resident's as a consumers' needs and virtual worlds as a new channels for brand presence, product placement and advertisement. Frequently, the authors brought up an issue of selling real-life product inside the game environment or possibilities for conducting various research⁸. This article is aimed to represent the forms of promotion in computer games on the example of Second Life and its based on literature review.

The paper is organized as follows. At first, the forms of promotion are presented, especially fundamental Kotler's forms of traditional promotional activities and next an example of non-traditional forms of promotion. Second part constitutes the review of forms of promotion featured inside the Second Life game. Final part contains some conclusions.

1. Forms of promotion

Kotler distinguishes the following promotional instruments: advertising, sales promotions, public relations, direct marketing and direct selling.

According to Kotler's definition, advertising covers all forms of non-personal presentation and promotes the idea, goods or services by a particular sponsor. The advertiser can be not only company but also museum, charity and government agency, which target their message to specific market. From a financial point of view advertising is a paid form of dissemination of information, regardless of its purpose. Advertisement represents product and company's offer and try to persuade audiences to rapid purchases. It can also reach to geographically dispersed consumers in successful way and build long term image of product or brand⁹.

Sales promotions includes promotional sales activities geared toward customers and persuading them to choose product or service of the brand. Sales promotion can be also describe as short-term encouragements to purchase product or service. This tool arouse the need to buy particular product or service at a certain time, for example by price reduction, coupons, in-store demonstrations. Sales promotion exert positive impact on consumers through tree different factors, namely economic, informative and affective factor. The economic factor is related to the economic

⁶ Y. Peng, D. Ke, *Consumer trust in 3D virtual worlds and its impact on real world purchase intention*, "Nankai Business Review International" 2015, 6(4), p. 381-382.

⁷ M. Hofman-Kohlmeyer, *Characterization of new...*, p. 182.

⁸ J. Ramanathan, K. Purani, *Brand extension evaluation: real world and virtual world*, "Journal of Product & Brand Management" 2014, 23(7), p. 505-506.

⁹ P. Kotler, *Marketing...*, p. 589-590, 600.

benefit associated with a product purchase, the informative factor influence on beliefs about a brand or industry, affective factor is related to consumers' feelings and emotions toward the product or brand¹⁰. Sales promotions provide immediate effects but for short period of time¹¹.

Public relations (PR) is aimed to deal with the organization's image in public opinion and develop communications strategies to build strong relationship with them. Every company can create a public relations program, despite of limited budget or number of staff¹². Effective public relations help managers to develop and maintain a positive reputation of a companies. It's also useful in building positive relationships with the various stakeholders¹³. Public relations activities encompass establishing and maintaining contacts with the press with presenting news about the company in the best light, popularizing the company's products, popularizing the company's activities and advises managers on all aspects related to public issue and company's image¹⁴.

Direct marketing has its origins in companies that sell their products from catalogue or by mail-order¹⁵. It use a direct channel to reach to the customers in order to avoid intermediary companies. Amongst this channel can be find post, catalogues, telemarketing, interactive television or websites. The primary aim of direct marketing is to gain customers' orders¹⁶. Direct marketing include acquiring new customers as well as keeping those already gained. Companies create databases and frequently use customer relationship management (CRM) programmes. Information's about customers allow to personalize products, pricing and promotions to meet customers' needs. This kind of activities are implement in order to make customer loyal to the product or company¹⁷.

Direct selling is the most effective instrument in the later stage of purchase process, especially in building customers' preferences and persuading them to action¹⁸. Peterson and Wotruba mentioned the following definition of direct selling: "a method of distribution of consumer goods and services through personal (seller to buyer) contact away from fixed business locations, primarily in a home"¹⁹. Personal selling

¹⁰ Y. Köksal, O. Spahiu, *The efficiency of monetary and non-monetary sales promotions on brand preference: A case of albanian GSM companies*/Parasalveparasalolmayansatispromosyonlarininmarkatercihiüzerindekietsisi: Arnavutluk GSM firmalariörnegi*. "İstanbul Üniversitesi İşletme Fakültesi Dergisi" 2014, 43(2), p. 320.

¹¹ P. Kotler, *Marketing...*, p. 590.

¹² D. Jerman, G. Vukovic, B. Zavrsnik, *How public relations impact on a company's effectiveness*, "Organizacija" 2008, 41(3), p. 91.

¹³ J.K. Springston, R.A. Weaver Lariscy, *Public relations effectiveness in public health institutions*, "Journal of Health and Human Services Administration" 2005, 28(1), p. 220, 227.

¹⁴ P. Kotler, *Marketing...*, p. 628.

¹⁵ S. Harridge-March, *Direct marketing and relationships*, "Direct Marketing" 2008, 2(4), p. 193.

¹⁶ P. Kotler, *Marketing...*, p. 632.

¹⁷ S. Harridge-March, *Direct marketing...*, p. 193, 195.

¹⁸ P. Kotler, *Marketing...*, p. 590.

¹⁹ R.A. Peterson, T. R. Wotruba, *What is direct selling?—Definition, perspectives, and research agenda*, "Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management" 1996, 16(4), p. 3.

is characterized by three qualities, namely personal contact, building a bond and the commitment of the buyer to make a purchase as a result of the seller's offering²⁰. A customers' sense of saturation with traditional advertising and growing costs caused increasing interest of companies with non-standard forms of promotion.

Amongst non-standard marketing activities, can be notice the ambient media. Ambient media can be describe as an alternative medium, different from commonly known press, television, radio or Internet. Ambient media refer to custom action which allow advertisers to stand out. Ambient media can be divided for five categories:

- reaching out to the customer when he traveling (e. g. advertising on tickets or postcards),
- reaching out to the customer when he is enjoying himself (e. g. advertising on beer stands),
- reaching out to parents and children (e. g. advertisement on textbooks),
- getting to the customer near the shop where he is shopping (e. g. advertising on buses, advertising on receipts),
- other (e. g. advertising on lids)²¹.

Nowadays, people learned to avoid traditional advertisement, especially in television programs by changing the channel²². Practitioners started to employ product placement as a solution of this problem. Product placement is more likely to be remembered and is widely utilize to increase attention, interest and purchase intention²³. Product placement can be defined as a paid, intentional and inconspicuous message about the branded product embedded in a movie or TV program²⁴.

Śliwińska and Pacut point out the following five types of product placement: generic placement, utility placement, brand placement, corporate placement and organization placement. Generic placement take place when the product category is placed, without any information about brand or producer. Utility placement shows the ways how the product should be utilized. Brand placement is when the brand or/and product is featured. Corporate placement can be describe by company name or brand of product featured on the billboards, neon signs or the others advertising medium. Organization placement take place when organization or company is embedded in the plot²⁵.

²⁰ P. Kotler, *Marketing...*, p. 590.

²¹ N. Hatałska, *Niestandardowe formy promocji*, „Marketing i Rynek” 2002, 11(09), p. 7.

²² C.R. Patel, P.V. Patel, *Brand Recall for Product Placement in Hindi Movies*, “Global Journal of Management And Business Research” 2015, 15(7), p. 10.

²³ F. Guennemann, Y.C. Cho, *The effectiveness of product placement by media types: Impact of image and intention to purchase*, “Journal of Service Science (Online)” 2014, 7(1), p. 29-30.

²⁴ J. Kramolis, M. Kopecková, *Product Placement: A Smart Marketing Tool Shifting a Company to the Next Competitive Level*, “Journal of Competitiveness” 2013, Vol. 5, p. 100.

²⁵ M. Hofman-Kohlmeyer, *The role of product placement in brand management on the example of Second Life game*, “Zarządzanie społeczno-ekonomiczne wobec wyzwań XXI wieku” 2017, Wydawnictwo Sophia, Katowice 2017, p. 166.

One of the oldest and prevalent form of communication between consumers that can result in purchase product or service is word-of-mouth marketing (WOM)²⁶. Sharma, Qiang, Wenjun, Qi defined word of mouth as “the informal transmission of ideas, comments, opinions and information between two or more individuals, neither one of which is a marketer”. Through virtual world, information’s are gathered amongst virtual friends and experts and can be exchange worldwide at lower cost²⁷. In comparison to advertisement, information’s proliferated between friends and family are perceived as more credible by people. Moreover, this solution is much cheaper than traditional advertising for example in television²⁸.

2. Forms of promotion in Second Life game

Last couple of years, computer games no longer attract a teenagers or a child but also adult players. More diversified demographic of players contributed to increase in interest of placing marketing activities inside the game environment²⁹. Games are new means of communication and promotion, especially games based on virtual worlds like Second Life. Virtual world is an environment with virtual representations of various elements from the real world and players embody the animated characters. Players (residents of virtual world) can create characteristics and behavior of avatars in flexible way. Second Life is the most popular virtual world, without defined goal of the game and oriented on social aspect. Second Life have own developed economy with own virtual currency inside the game. Many firms make real world money³⁰.

Companies can exploit the advertising potential of applications such as Second Life game³¹. Marketers frequently use virtual mass media similarly like in the real world. They can choose advertisement in newspapers or on virtual radio, pay for ads in location search engine. The most popular places for brand are billboards, banners, screens and neon lights on virtual buildings³². Organizations like MetaAdverse, rent out virtual billboards to firms and next track who views those billboards to obtain information to advertisers comparable to the data derived about traditional TV or online advertising. Virtual communication is cheaper than traditional online adver-

²⁶ J. Ahrens, J.R. Coyle, M.A. Strahilevitz, *Electronic word of mouth: The effects of incentives on e-referrals by senders and receivers*, “European Journal of Marketing” 2013, 47(7), p. 1035-1036.

²⁷ G. Sharma, Y. Qiang, S. Wenjun, L. Qi, *Communication in virtual world: Second life and business opportunities*, “Information Systems Frontiers” 2013, 15(4), p. 680-681.

²⁸ J. Ahrens, J.R. Coyle, M.A. Strahilevitz, *Electronic word of mouth: The effects of incentives on e-referrals by senders and receivers*, “European Journal of Marketing” 2013, 47(7), p. 1035-1036.

²⁹ M. W. Smith, W. Sun, J. Sutherland, B. Mackie, *Game advertising: a conceptual framework and exploration of advertising prevalence*, “The Computer Games Journal” 2014, 3(1), 94.

³⁰ M. Hofman-Kohlmeyer, *Characterization of new...*, p. 175-176.

³¹ A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, *The fairyland of Second Life: Virtual social worlds and how to use them*, “Business Horizons” 2009, 52(6), p. 566.

³² J. Laskowska-Witek, M. Mitrega, *Brand Promotion Throught Computer Games on the Example of Second Life*, “StudiaEkonomiczne” 2014, 205, p. 41.

tising. An example represents Canada's IMAX Corporation used virtual advertising to promote fifth part of the Harry Potter saga, namely "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix"³³.

Sales promotion can be carried out by giving free samples of real product or offering coupons for shopping in real market.

Amongst various public relation tools, companies often organize exhibitions, cultural and shopping events, lectures, talks and competitions. For example, L'Oreal Paris and virtual modeling agency Aspire organized a contest for the face of "L'Oreal Paris Glamour Fashion Show". Similarly Coca-Cola organized a competition where participants created a project of virtual machines for beverages³⁴.

IBM held virtual conference in 2008, in order to increase its presence in the market for technologies. They reduced the real world cost and reached to the people all around the world. In the same year, Intel also conducted virtual conference. The event include keynote presentations, live product demos and social networking activities. Conference had fun for participants and created shared memories. Participants can used text chat for conversation during the event³⁵.

Popular form of promotion in Second Life is the sponsoring of events. The British Guardian newspaper and Intel supported together a virtual music festival, the Second Fest³⁶.

Very often, well-known companies decide to buy their own locations inside the virtual world. This locations are named "branded islands". Branded islands are the place where residents of Second Life can relax, play, purchase virtual products and are strongly associated with the brand community³⁷. In 2006, Coca-Cola bought own island to promote the brand and gather public community. Residents can visit "Coke Studio" to record music and get free virtual drinks. The advantages for Coca-Cola are brand promotion, marketing campaign, public attention and make business strategy³⁸.

Some companies chose to conduct various activities in terms of direct marketing³⁹. Companies can set up virtual stores in order to allow residents use virtual products. For example Toyota shows in Second Life virtual editions of the Scion xB model⁴⁰. Firms expect that virtual stores in Second Life will help them to reach to new customers and better understand their needs⁴¹.

³³ A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, *The fairyland of Second Life...*, p. 566.

³⁴ J. Laskowska-Witek, M. Mitrega, *Brand Promotion...*, p. 31.

³⁵ G. Sharma, L. Baoku, W.L. Juan, *Online marketing in second life virtual world 2011*, p. 13.

³⁶ A.M. Kaplan & M. Haenlein, *The fairyland of Second Life...*, p. 566.

³⁷ J. Laskowska-Witek, M. Mitrega, *Brand Promotion...*, p. 42.

³⁸ G. Sharma, L. Baoku, W.L. Juan, *Online marketing...*, p. 13.

³⁹ J. Laskowska-Witek, M. Mitrega, *Brand Promotion...*, p. 41.

⁴⁰ A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, *The fairyland of Second Life...*, p. 566.

⁴¹ R.Y. Arakji, K.R. Lang, *Avatar business value analysis: a method for the evaluation of business value creation in virtual commerce*, 2008, p. 209.

The Crowne Plaza hotel chain, owned by the InterContinental Hotels Group, offers companies virtual meeting rooms in Second Life, in the same way as they can rent rooms in Crowne Plaza hotels in the United States, Great Britain, or Switzerland⁴².

In the field of direct selling, some companies choose setting up virtual stores with full transactional opportunities, for example American Apparel that sell virtual versions of their real products. The others decide to only allow residents to interact with the virtual products or services without buying anything. These companies are focused on building a brand image⁴³. Avatars buy various products and services on the entertainment purposes. Moreover, products and brands help them to build their virtual identities⁴⁴.

The large logistic company, Deutsche Post World Net, offered virtual card to Second Life residents. Thereafter these cards are subsequently delivered as real postcards all around the world. This specific form of selling can help overcome some of the disadvantages associated with traditional electronic commerce, e. g. lack of appropriate product presentation, and above all fashion and design items, or insufficient social interaction⁴⁵. Similar activities were also implemented by firms like Circuit City and Amazon and evoked positive reactions among Second Life users.

Kaplan and Haenlein carried out a survey amongst users of Second Life. The residents strongly support the idea of setting up virtual world stores as an extension of traditional e-commerce activities and using them to selling real life products. Relatively small group prefer to keep real life and Second Life unrelated. The vast majority of users expressed concerns about trust and security which negatively impact on their willingness to buy products in virtual stores. Some of the users admitted that they would be willing to buy via Second Life if companies offered them a discounts⁴⁶.

Arakji and Lang explored the potential benefits for companies' from virtual presence in game environment on the example of Second Life. In order to achieved the assumed goal they created Avatar Business Value Analysis. The analysis focused on the business value that may be created through the establishment of virtual stores.

In ABV Analysis the authors defined and interpreted the probabilities of possible effect that can take place during the interaction of an avatar with a virtual store. When an avatar is strolling inside the virtual world, he may not notice the virtual store, despite the effort that the company make, for psychological or technical reasons. If the avatar does notice the virtual store, he may enter and interact with some of virtual

⁴² A.M. Kaplan, M.Haenlein, *The fairyland of Second Life...*, p. 568.

⁴³ R.Y. Arakji, K.R. Lang, *Avatar business value...*, p. 209.

⁴⁴ B. Koles, P. Nagy, *Virtual customers behind avatars: The relationship between virtual identity and virtual consumption in second life*, "Journal of theoretical and applied electronic commerce research" 2012, 7(2), p. 91, 94.

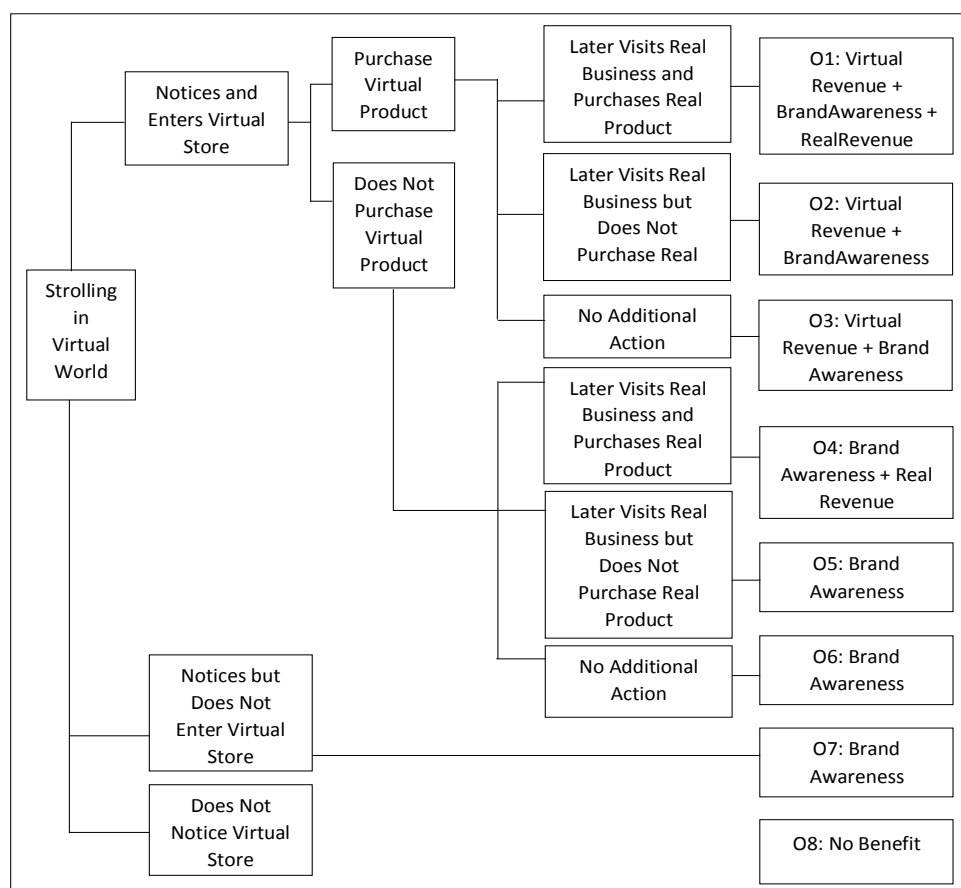
⁴⁵ A.M. Kaplan, M.Haenlein, *The fairyland of Second Life...*, p. 567.

⁴⁶ A.M. Kaplan, M. Haenlein, *Consumer use and business potential of virtual worlds: the case of "Second Life"*, "The International Journal on Media Management" 2009, 11(3-4), p. 98-99.

product. When he decides to enter the virtual store, he may buy a virtual product or not. Regardless of decision he made, visiting the virtual store creates brand awareness. The real consumer that owns the avatar may visit and purchase products in the real world from the company's website or brick-and-mortar stores in the future. Arakji and Lang noticed that companies trying to sell their real products need to attract the users towards their web or brick-and-mortar stores to finalize the transactions.

The figure 1 represents the series of decisions faced by a virtual customer when he notices a virtual store. Figure 1 does not include real transactions (e.g. buying with a credit card a product for use in the real world) through virtual stores⁴⁷.

Figure 1. Avatar business value analysis
Rysunek 1. Analiza "avatar business value"



Source: R.Y. Arakji, & K.R. Lang, *Avatar business value analysis: a method for the evaluation of business value creation in virtual commerce*, 2008, p. 211.

⁴⁷ M. Hofman-Kohlmeyer, *Characterization of new...*, p. 180.

Companies embed a brand identifier in games similarly to product placement in television shows or movie but playing games may have different effect than traditional product placement because of the realm of involvement and its impact on customers' attention⁴⁸.

In 2008, when Second Life gained the popularity, more than 100 real life brands joined to this virtual world. The brands come from different sectors, e. g.: cars (e. g. Mazda, Renault, Nissan, BMW, Fiat, Mercedes Benz), media (e.g. Reuters, Channel 4 Radio), travel (e.g. STA Travel), consumer electronics (e. g. Intel, Sony Ericsson), consumer goods (e. g. Reebok, American Apparel, Calvin Klein, Adidas, L'Oreal Paris), telecommunications (e.g. Vodafone, Telus), finance (e.g. ABN, ING), professional services (e.g. IBM, PA Consulting)⁴⁹.

For example, Starwood Hotel was opened in Second Life before building the physical hotel in real world. Residents of Second Life has tested architectural design and furniture choice. The company gathered important information's about customers' preferences. Reebok design shoes in Second Live for avatars. People in real world wear the same models.

Nissan made use of the opportunity offered by Second Life in similar way to Starwood Hotel. Nissan launched the new model of cars in virtual world. This car existed in real life. Company get ideas and feedback from residents to design forthcoming models. This solution benefit in cost saving, new model development, socialization and brand promotion. After that, Nissan frequently utilized virtual world on the purposes of experiment and design new cars⁵⁰.

Firms frequently collaborate with local communities and interest groups⁵¹. Virtual communities can be utilized on the word-of-mouth communications purposes. Through virtual world, information's are gathered amongst virtual friends and experts and can be exchange worldwide at lower cost⁵².

As a special form of word-of-mouth communication, companies also can utilize an opportunity of viral marketing. An attractive or/and controversial message is disseminated amongst residents of Second Life. "Virus" can take various forms of shocking idea, game, animation, video, image, spot, song, poem or message that avatars share with each other by e-mail, instant messaging and chat rooms. Many times, managers actively participate in Second Life forum and blogs⁵³.

There are some empirical research in literature, which investigated how the particular features of video game promotion affect the desired outcome of promotional

⁴⁸ M. Lee, R.J. Faber, *Effects of product placement...*, p. 76.

⁴⁹ S. Barnes, J. Mattsson, *Brand value in virtual worlds: an axiological approach*, "Journal of Electronic Commerce Research" 2008, 9(3), p. 195-196.

⁵⁰ G. Sharma, L. Baoku, W.L. Juan, *Online marketing...*, p. 12, 13.

⁵¹ J. Laskowska-Witek, M. Mitreġa, *Brand Promotion ...*, p. 41.

⁵² G. Sharma, Y. Qiang, S. Wenjun & L. Qi, *Communication in virtual world...*, p. 680-681.

⁵³ J. Laskowska-Witek, M. Mitreġa, *Brand Promotion ...*, p. 41.

message. The conducted research provides practical information for advertising agencies and clients. The most popular studies refer to the impact of degree of visibility product placed in the game plot on the effectiveness of the message. The effectiveness is understood as strong brand recall by consumers after playing the game. Research shows that when the visibility is larger the better the brand is remembered⁵⁴.

There are also research devoted the role of attention of players geared toward promotional message. Lee and Faber assumed that he more attention has been devoted to certain tasks in the past, the less attention is left to future tasks. The research indicated that the more attention the game needs to pay, the less it is left to process information about the brand. The authors also focused on the issue where the brand or product is located and distinguished focal placement or peripheral placement. The products embedded in more visible manner are better remembered by the players than those put in the background. It is also often investigated how congruence of product and game plot influence on brand recall. Lee and Faber gave the proof that very incongruent product are better remembered but evoke negative emotions in the audience⁵⁵.

The growing ranks of scholars are interested in the role of the interactive character of the game. There are a lot of conflicting research results. For example Rifon, Taylor Quilliam, Paek, Weatherspoon, Kim, Smreker disproved the hypothesis that interactive feature of computer game cause greater impact on consumers⁵⁶, whereas Van Reijmersdal, Jansz, Peters, Van Noort G. achieve different results⁵⁷.

Very popular research topic constitutes influence of players engagement on brand recall. According to survey, the more the player is involved in the game the less information about the brand remembers, no matter if the brand is very visible or not⁵⁸.

The issue of children as a target market of marketing campaign also gain popularity amongst scholars and marketers⁵⁹. The pivotal role plays a children's knowledge about persuasive characters of promotional message in computer games. Recognition of sales intentions can change a child's response to a promotional message and limit their trust⁶⁰.

⁵⁴ V. Cauberghe, P. De Pelsmacker, *ADVERGAMES: The Impact of Brand Prominence and Game Reputation on Brand Responses*, "Journal of Advertising" 2010, 39(1), p. 5, 12.

⁵⁵ M. Lee, R.J. Faber, *Effects of product placement...*, p. 77-78, 86-87.

⁵⁶ N.J. Rifon, E. Taylor Quilliam, H.J. Paek, L.J. Weatherspoon, S.K. Kim, K.C. Smreker, *Age-dependent effects of food advergame brand integration and interactivity*, "International Journal of Advertising" 2014, 33(3), p. 477, 500-501.

⁵⁷ E.A. Van Reijmersdal, J. Jansz, O. Peters, G. Van Noort, *The effects of interactive brand placements in online games on children's cognitive, affective, and conative brand responses*, "Computers in Human Behavior" 2010, 26(6), p. 1787-1794.

⁵⁸ M. Lee, R.J. Faber, *Effects of product placement...*, p. 77-78, 86-87.

⁵⁹ O.B. Büttner, A. Florack, B.G. Serfas, *A dual-step and dual-process model of advertising effects: Implications for reducing the negative impact of advertising on children's consumption behavior*, "Journal of Consumer Policy" 2014, 37(2), p. 162.

⁶⁰ S. An, S. Stern, *Mitigating the effects of advergames on children*, "Journal of Advertising" 2011, 40(1), p. 44.

According to research, promotion in computer games can be effective tool in brand building process⁶¹. Despite progress made, there is a still a need of further research in the field of effectiveness of particular forms of promotion in the game environment⁶².

Yang, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Dinun and Arpan indicated a need of research on long term effects of promotion in computer games. In most of the surveys conducted, the questionnaire was filled out immediately after the game. It is also important to identify the impact of the type of product placement on its effectiveness (e.g. passive placement such as traditional form of billboards and active advertising like using product by avatars)⁶³.

Terlutter and Capella noticed a need of analyzing of dynamic advertising, displayed on the billboards in the game according to the established criteria, such as time of day, geographic region and how to target it. Future research should enhance adjustment displaying of advertisement to target market⁶⁴.

Rosado and Agante recommended to compare effectiveness of product placement of more familiar brands and less known brands amongst children⁶⁵.

Chen and Deterding noticed that can be a meaningful differences of perceiving and interpretation of in-game product placement in particular countries and cultures⁶⁶.

Granquist, Strömberg and Söilen mentioned that future research should explore the role of interactivity as a game feature which influence (or not) on effectiveness of promotional message in computer games. In research should take part active players as well as viewers. Additionally, the survey must be repeated after some period of time⁶⁷.

Vashisht recommended to investigate the impact of particular factors such as product placement congruity with game plot and game involvement on effectiveness of promotional message in computer games⁶⁸.

⁶¹ P. Walsh, G. Clavio, S. Mullane, W. Whisenant, *Brand Awareness and Attitudes Towards Political Advertisements in Sport Video Games*, "Public Organization Review" 2014, 14(2), p. 135.

⁶² M. Yang, D.R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, L. Dinu, L. M. Arpan, *The effectiveness of "in-game" advertising: Comparing college students' explicit and implicit memory for brand names*, "Journal of Advertising" 2006, 35(4), p. 143.

⁶³ M. Yang, D.R. Roskos-Ewoldsen, L. Dinu, L.M. Arpan, *The effectiveness of "in-game" advertising...*, p. 150.

⁶⁴ R. Terlutter, M.L. Capella, *The gamification of advertising: analysis and research directions of in-game advertising, advergames, and advertising in social network games*, "Journal of Advertising" 2013, 42(2-3), p. 107.

⁶⁵ R. Rosado, L. Agante, *The Effectiveness of Advergames in Enhancing Children's Brand Recall Image, and Preference/a Eficácia Dos Jogos Publicitários Para Potenciar a Notoriedade, Preferência E Imagem Da Marca Nas Crianças*, "Revista Portuguesa de Marketing" 2011, 14(27), p. 43.

⁶⁶ H. Chen, A. Deterding, *College-aged young consumers' interpretations of product placement in social games*, "Young Consumers" 2013, 14(1).

⁶⁷ C. Granquist, F. Strömberg, K. S. Söilen, *Games as a marketing channel - the impact on players and spectator*, "International Journal of Electronic Business Management" 2015, 13, p. 64.

⁶⁸ D. Vashisht, S.S., *Effects of brand placement strength, prior game playing experience and game involvement on brand recall in advergames*, "Journal of Indian Business Research" 2015, 7(3), p. 307.

Conclusion

Prevalence of traditional advertising, perceive by consumers as intrusive and irritating, and marketers' seeking of new methods of attracting consumers' attention have led to featuring promotional activities inside the computer games' virtual worlds, such as Second Life. Well-known promotional instruments like advertising or public relations, can be find in game environment.

In terms of advertising, companies frequently use advertisement in virtual media, e. g. virtual radio or billboard, in the same way like in the real world. Sales promotion encompass free samples and coupons for shopping. There are many PR tools, such as events, exhibitions and competitions. The popular form of promotion is also sponsoring of virtual events. Frequently companies buy own locations inside Second Life, named "branded islands". Firms also set up virtual outlets in order to sell virtual versions of real life products or in order to sell real products via virtual world. Inside Second Life game product placement of real life brands and products gained popularity. Firms from various sectors decided to embedded brand identifiers inside the game plot. Most often product placement is utilized to gather some information's about consumers' preferences. Vast part of authors mentioned about opportunities of word-of-mouth inside virtual communities and viral marketing.

Literature review offer some research, which investigated how the particular features of video game promotion affect the desired outcome of promotional message. The conducted survey provides practical information for companies. Although significant progress was made, there is a still a need of further research in this field.

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