

# FORMATION AND DIMENSIONS OF MARKETING CULTURE UNDER THE CONTEMPORARY CONDITIONS OF COMPETITION

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*In order to survive in the market, companies seek competitive advantages. Unfortunately, under the contemporary conditions of competition, such conventional advantages, as lower price and better or more convenient packing of goods, are insufficient, as competitors may emulate these advantages rather quickly. New vantages that would be difficult to copy could be judged by consumers as exclusive attributes of the activities of an enterprise are requisite. Such competitive exclusiveness in the market, and, particularly, in communication with consumers could be obtained with reference to marketing culture.*

*The core of marketing culture will be revealed in this article through interface between the culture of an enterprise (organization) and marketing when answering the following questions:*

*What is marketing culture?*

*What are the main components and dimensions of marketing culture?*

*What assumptions can be made about marketing culture for the company desiring to remain competitive?*

*Keywords: organizational culture, marketing culture, marketing culture structure, cultural dimensions*

## Introduction

Both theorists and practitioners more and more often refer to the connection between marketing activity and culture. Marketing activity and implementation in different cultural surroundings necessitate a detailed analysis of these activities, and their integration into a given cultural environment it is not an easy task as the same actions of marketing are

interpreted differently in different cultural surroundings. Furthermore, the cultural environment itself has a tendency to fluctuate, although marginally.

An appropriate marketing culture secures success for a company by meeting the requirements of consumers in global, international and local markets. Thus, in this sense, the development of a marketing culture is one of the major and newer trends of scientific

research oriented towards the inducement of social and economic progress.

As competition among goods intensifies, meeting consumer requirements, securing their retention, and marketing efficiency are closely connected to marketing culture (Webster 1995) and company values (Norburn, Dunn, Birley and Boxx 1995). Companies seek to introduce goods and implement activities in the market that competitors could not easily copy and which are held by consumers as a distinctive attribute of the company. Such competitive exclusiveness for an enterprise could be obtained with reference to marketing culture.

The culture of marketing is connected to the system of valuables, manifestations of culture in elements of the marketing complex (product, price, distribution and promotion) and the ethical aspects of implementing marketing means. The concept of marketing culture itself has been little investigated (Parasuraman 1986; Webster 1995, 1993; Appiah-Adu and Singh 1999; Seabrook 2000). Several works have analyzed manifestations of culture in distinct elements of the marketing complex or its constituent segments. Other scientists have surveyed the influence of culture on planning (Leppard and McDonald 1991), market orientation (Narver and Slater 1994; Selnes, Jaworski and Kohli 1996), and the effectiveness of marketing (Dunn, Norburn and Birley 1994; Norburn, Dunn, Birley and Payne 1990). Other scientists, in analyzing cultural manifestations in company marketing activities, have mostly concentrated on the cultural characteristics of different nations, emphasizing their impact on marketing activity (Cateora 1993; Usunier 1993; Jain 1996; Kuvykaitė 1997). Recent works have paid little attention to the direct analysis of marketing culture, and instead have concentrated on revealing the layers of marketing culture of a company and their influence on company

competitiveness. These works are more fragmentary and do not provide a complete picture of marketing culture. Thus, *the concept of marketing culture, conceptualization of its structure and influence on company competitive advantage require further investigation*. This article is intended to provide answers to these issues.

*The goal of this article* is to highlight those dimensions of marketing culture that facilitate competitive advantage, by revealing the origins of marketing culture of a company, its specific components, structure, and determinants from a *scientific viewpoint*.

The main **method of investigation** is an analysis of scientific literature concerning issues of marketing culture and the synthesis of fragmentary knowledge about various aspects of the problem.

Our study of marketing culture is restricted to an analysis of the main components of culture that typically influence marketing activities, in order to assess the influence of marketing culture on the competitive ability of a company. It was not the intent to analyze all of the components of marketing culture in all areas of marketing activities.

The article consists of three sections. The first section introduces the concept of marketing culture, surveys the origins of marketing culture, and present the definitions used throughout this paper. The determinant factors of marketing culture under the changeable circumstances of competition are analyzed in the second section, and the third section concentrates on those dimensions of marketing culture that facilitate competitive advantage.

## **1. The Concept of Marketing Culture**

Although basic values are comparable across societies, company (especially foreign) activity

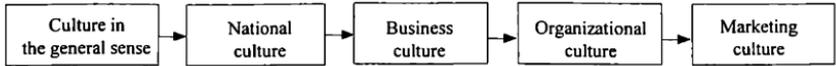


Fig. 1. The Origins of Marketing Culture  
(prepared by the authors)

is influenced by social-economic culture. This is one of the main reasons why companies must organize their marketing activities bearing in mind the societal culture in which it works. Societal culture is influenced by all of its members, thus in conducting marketing activities and developing a marketing culture it is important to assess not only the interests of the seller, but of the buyer as well, regardless of country of origin and their differences. Increased attention to company marketing culture assessment, through highlighting its influence on company competitiveness, is particularly important at the present, when the extent and rate of competition are on the increase.

### 1.1. The Origins of Marketing Culture

Marketing, in theory and practice, refers to the market activities of a company, with the intent to reap economic and social advantages. These activities are influenced by organizational culture. Consequently, marketing culture is not only influenced by organizational culture but may also be considered a component of it.

Deshpande and Webster (1989) have identified few conceptual studies, which relate organizational culture to marketing. Most of the literature on culture focuses on its influence on management theory and practice. Because culture is multidimensional, it is rather difficult to define and more difficult still to apply it to marketing. Therefore, the definition of the concept of culture and its components is a necessary first step in relating it to a company's

marketing activities. Thus, our analysis of the concept of marketing culture will begin with an overview of the general concept and follow the order depicted in Figure 1.

**Culture in the general sense.** The concept of culture was introduced in the social sciences in the nineteenth century, with the concept of a modernistic society. At that time, the concepts of culture and civilization applied to a description of advanced human activity. Culture involves all human activities from a social sciences viewpoint. As indicated in *The World Book Encyclopaedia* (1972), the first definition of culture as a sociological term was introduced by British anthropologist Tylor in 1871: "...culture is such a complex aggregate that involves knowledge, faith, morality, manner and whatever and all other lights and habits of a person as a member of a society." Tylor refers to the culture as the result of all human achievement. American anthropologist

Nelson (1990) described a culture as a system of significations, consequences and orientations of a social environment. This concept is a complex one, as countries may have several cultures and its definition in the business context confounded because the business culture of a specific country usually has its own unique characteristics. According to Nelson (1990), culture could be defined as a model of integrated knowledge, expectations and behaviour of an individual that depends on the willingness and capability to transfer an experience to further generations. According to Nelson (1990), *national business culture* is comprised of language, religion, values and attitudes, law, education, politics, technology, social

groups, all of which varies from culture to culture.

**Business culture.** Radlesome (1997) defines business culture as the viewpoints, values and standards that cover commercial activity and aid in shaping the manner of companies in a given country. The past and present business environment in that country forms the core of the business culture of every country. The business environment includes connections between business and government, business and finance, business and the labour market and so on. Culture is like a code that is acquirable and transferable, though learning and transferring require communication, and communication necessitates codes and symbols that could be learned and shared.

Interests in *organizational culture* grew in the 1980s by both scholars and practitioners (Deshpande and Webster 1989; Peters and Waterman 1982; Smircich 1983), with the understanding of the importance of market orientation (Narver and Slater 1990; Dunn et al 1994; Norburn, Birley, Dunn, Payne 1990). Organizational culture was addressed in Lithuania by Jucevičienė and Poškienė (1998), and Vanagas and Paulauskaitė (1998).

Various definitions of organizational culture are found in the literature, one of the most accepted in the field of marketing being that of Deshpande and Webster (1989), who define organizational culture as *a model of general values and beliefs which helps individuals understand the functioning of the organization and at the same time establishes norms of behaviour in the company*. Here we find three layers of organizational culture, comprising values, norms and behaviour. Deshpande and Webster (1989) distinguished three fundamental layers of organizational culture, while Schein (1992) introduced an additional component, which he termed "means." These means are commonly held to be myths and

stories, agreements, rituals and language. Schein emphasizes that means are the most visible layer of culture, although their meaning is normally difficult to decipher.

Based on the assertions of researchers of organizational culture, organizational culture is defined as a dominant set of values, attitudes, behavioural norms and a visible behaviour, which forms when an organization seeks to, integrated from within and survive in its environment, and which reflects the whole of the organization (N. Paulauskaitė 1997). Thus *organizational culture describes the behaviour within the company, while marketing culture, as an element of organizational culture, describes the internal behaviour of the company, as well as its relation to the environment, as marketing requires an orientation toward the consumer and set goals from a systemic viewpoint*.

If the definition of organizational culture as comprised of several subcultures, united by a dominant subculture is accepted, then marketing culture should be understood as the dominant subculture of the organization (Ouchi 1981; Morgan 1986; Sackma 1992).

In 1992 Schein presented a three-layer model of a culture (Figure 2), characterized as "one of the most conceptual models ever offered" (Hatch 1993), for it distinguishes separate categories of organizational culture (which are commonly referred to as layers).

Hatch (1993) argues that Schein's (1992) model of culture relies too much on separating cultural layers, without illustrating the processes, which link the layers of organizational culture. In analyzing organizational culture, it is necessary to distinguish these layers (that culture is comprised of means, values and assumptions), however, equally important are the processes uniting these layers. Hatch (1993) presented a "dynamic model of culture<" which reveals these processes of interaction uniting the layers.

THE 1 <sup>ST</sup> LAYER. MEANS AND ART:	
	Technology; Art; Visible and audible models of behaviour;
THE 2 <sup>ND</sup> LAYER.	VALUES:
	Ascertainable in the physical environment; Ascertainable only by social consensus;
THE 3 <sup>RD</sup> LAYER.	MAIN ASSUMPTIONS
	Relation with the environment; Nature of reality, time and place; Nature of human activity; Nature of human relationships

Fig. 2. Three-Layer Model of Organizational Culture (Schein 1992)

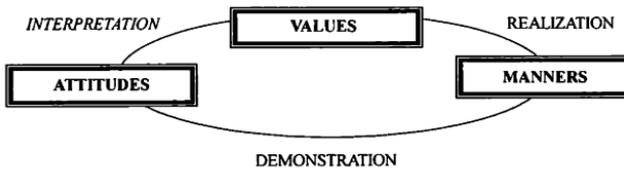


Fig. 3. Dynamic Model of Culture (Hatch 1993)

The three layers of culture and the processes, to which he refers, in subculture of organizational culture, are depicted in Figure 3.

In summary, while Schein's (1992) model introduced a three-component view of culture, Hatch (1993) provided meaning to the dynamic processes occurring among the layers of culture, while, the works of proponents of cultural pluralism, presented a view of culture as comprised of subcultures, united by a dominant subculture.

Efforts by Lithuanian scholars (Poškienė, 1998; Vanagas and Paulauskaitė 1998) were also made to more precisely define organizational culture. This definition, which states that organizational culture is a dominant set of values, attitudes, behavioural norms and visible behaviours, which forms when an organization seeks to integrated from within and survive in its environment, and which distinguishes one organization from another (Paulauskaitė 1997).

**Marketing culture.** In analyzing the essence of marketing culture, we must first understand that this is a subcomponent of culture in general. Each country and region has its own culture, which will not be discussed here, as this would reveal only specific country characteristics, since not all elements in different cultures manifest themselves in the same ways.

Because marketing is one of the spheres of company activity facilitating attainment of its economic and social goals, marketing culture must be viewed as a component of organizational culture. *Marketing culture* is, thus, an element of organizational culture, which manifests itself through relationships between the company and other market actors (Figure 4). Market actors are consumers, partners, government institutions, competitors and other companies, which have ties to the company.

Based on the above, it may be assumed that marketing culture will manifest itself through



Fig. 4. Marketing Culture as the Result of Interaction between the Organization and Market Actors (prepared by authors)

company marketing activities (interaction with the environment) or through internal marketing activities.

### 1.2. Definition of Marketing Culture

Because we were unable to find a precise definition of marketing culture, we will try to formulate this definition ourselves.

Several different definitions of marketing culture or market-oriented culture are found in the literature, the most important of which are those of Webster (1995), Narver and Slater (1990) and Deshpande, Farley and Webster (1993). Webster (1995) views marketing culture as unwritten company policy and rules, which describe the behavioural norms of organizational members, or as the reflection of the importance of the marketing function in all spheres of company activity, or, further still, as the means, by which marketing activities are implemented in the organization. Marketing culture has also been described as a culture full of illustrations and symbols (Seabrook 2000), carefully developed and used to define, support and strengthen products or company identity.

Webster (1993) has developed a 34-point scale to measure marketing culture in the services sector. Based on a carefully chosen methodology, Webster (1993) asserts that a company's marketing culture may be verified by means of measurements of service quality,

interpersonal relations, sales-orientation, organization, internal communication and innovativeness. Similarly, Narver and Slater (1990) have developed and empirically tested a model of market-oriented culture, based on orientation toward the consumer, competition and functional inter-coordination. In presenting market orientation as a characteristic of organizational culture, Narver and Slater (1990) define market orientation as a very important organizational culture trait, by means of which companies most effectively provide added value to the consumer and strengthen their market position. All of these definitions are interesting and have certain strengths; however, the views of market researchers toward market-oriented culture do not wholly correspond with the definitions of organizational culture presented by cultural theorist. Definitions of culture in marketing theory all see a "common" culture, regardless that culture theory states differently.

Thus, our definition of culture will be based on a summary of the above. *Marketing culture is defined as a component of organizational culture, comprised of a set of the dominant values, norms, means and behaviour, which characterizes the individuality of the organization through its interaction with market actors.*

This definition sees culture as comprised of layers, reveals the dynamism of culture, and the

transfer of meaning within subcultures. Marketing culture is understood as a dominant, dynamic subculture, oriented toward the market (based on the definitions of culture theoreticians Hatch (1993) and Schein (1985) and marketing theoreticians Kohli and Jaworski (1990), Narver and Slater (1990); and Webster (1993). However, the inclusion of a few of the phrases in this definition requires further explanation. First, the definition mentions cultural layers (norms, values, rules, means and behaviour). Second, "interaction" should be understood as the procedural nature of marketing culture. Third, "individuality" emphasizes the uniqueness of culture and opportunities for competitive advantage. Fourth, because marketing culture, as a component of organizational culture, must dominate over alternative subcultures, it must be manifest throughout the entire organization.

In analyzing marketing culture, the main focus has been on the relationship between the company and consumers, rather than on its relationship with other market actors, as this would be too broad a topic for this article. This choice was based on the goal of marketing as an activity – to strive for maximum customer satisfaction and the attainment of profit.

Marketing culture also very much depends on business cultures, the number of which is determined by the variety of production sectors and spheres of human activity. Visible differences exist between companies such as retail trade and construction, real estate or distribution. To discuss each of these types of culture is impossible; we can only analyze the ways in which culture shapes employee behaviour, to meet consumer needs. It is also impossible to reveal all of the dos and don'ts of a given culture, thus we will concentrate on general characteristics of marketing culture and its components.

### *1.3. Layers of Marketing Culture*

In analyzing the origins of marketing culture, we identified certain characteristics of marketing culture, such as market orientation, the adaptation of culture to consumer culture, while additional traits will be revealed as we analyze the components of marketing culture.

Similar to the layers of organizational culture as analyzed in the literature (manifest culture, values, and unwritten rules) (Jucevičienė, Poškienė 1998), we may distinguish four interrelated layers of marketing culture (all oriented toward the market, based on the definition presented earlier in this paper, all oriented towards the market:

- 1) a system of values,
- 2) a system of norms,
- 3) a system of means, and
- 4) behaviour,

According to Schein (1992) values may be defined as a concept of the desired, specific or imaginary, which is characteristic of the individual or the group, and which governs one's choices depending on dominant traditions, means and results of one's behaviour. Norms (rules) differ from values in that they are more specific and are more related to behaviour. General values of a company provide a basis for the formation of specific norms (rules). Norms (rules) are also created for a desired behaviour, or the result of behaviour, which are either partly or wholly common to a specific group. Means are comprised of stories, agreements, rituals and language, created within the company and have strong symbolic meaning (Schein 1992). Behaviour refers to the behavioural models of the company. Based on the above, we derive four layers, which comprise the marketing culture of a market-oriented organization:

- 1) values common to the company, on which the company bases its market orientation;

- 2) the norms (rules) common to the company;
- 3) the means understood as achieving a market orientation; and
- 4) market-oriented behaviour.

Subsequent analysis will be concerned with how marketing culture may influence company activity and how a market-oriented marketing culture may create competitive advantage.

## 2. Determinant Factors of Marketing Culture under Changing Competitive Conditions

Competition is an every changing and dynamic phenomenon. In the future, competition will require faster product creation, more information, the ability to adjust to changing individual consumer needs, all achieved faster and at lower cost than in a mass-production based competitive system.

Based on the works of Kotler (1991), Gibson (1998), Goldman et al (1995) and others, as well as the generalizations arrived at above; we will attempt to reveal the factors determining the development of marketing culture and the importance of marketing culture in increasing the competitiveness of the firm.

*The cultural values of a company are important in analyzing how marketing culture influences company activity (Norburn, et al 1995). New management directions, such as total quality management, relationship marketing and cooperation theory all assert that employee knowledge and skills must be value, because this is how the company attains an advantage over its competitors, through the ability to take advantage of the market situation. For this reason continual employee development is necessary, initiated not only by company management but by the employees themselves, provided they understand their opportunities, for growth and recognition. The formation of*

*marketing culture, which reflects company values, is a rather complex and long term process. However, at the same time, the company is creating competitive advantage, since its competitors are incapable of copying that, which has been and is still being developed.*

*Globalization is first of all related to the satisfaction of consumer needs through standardization, based on the assumption that consumer needs, priorities and valuations are becoming more and more universal. In striving to remain winners under global competitive conditions, companies must apply marketing strategies, which guarantee the satisfaction of these needs. However, is a marketing strategy, based on standardized consumer needs satisfaction justified, and even implementable, considering the differences in culture across markets? In analyzing the influence of the local culture on consumer behaviour and marketing strategy, Usunier (1993) noted local resistance to globalization processes. On the other hand, we should not overemphasize the importance of cultural factors, as universal goods of high quality and reasonable price exist, while cultural differences emerge for the following reasons:*

- A product is surrounded by an environment that has a strong cultural context;
- Consumer behaviour is influenced by culture, by which the consumer consciously or unconsciously purchases goods or services of local origin (Usunier 1993).

*The literature on marketing stresses that marketing activity should be oriented toward creation and presentation of acceptable goods, which increase the material well-being of society and do not counter local culture.*

*The meaning of societal culture for the creation of a company's marketing culture is strong. Culture influences consumer purchasing decisions, as it is embedded in daily*

life, and consumer activities are based on their lifestyles and behaviour, which are determined by societal culture, social status as the like. In this way, the product, which the consumer purchases, reflects his / her values and consumer choices are thus determined by the culture of the group to which one belongs. Thus, companies, which attempt to avoid failure in new markets, are advised to conduct studies of the national culture and orient their marketing culture toward these obtained results.

*The marketing culture of a company must be adjusted to fit the consumer culture.* Globalization processes are occurring more at the level of competition, and not the level of consumer behaviour. Often natural cultural market entry barriers no less influence globalization processes than artificial entry barriers. Only by effectively utilizing marketing opportunities, does a company maintain good relations with its consumers. And more often than not, the value complex of those companies, which do maintain these good relations, distinguishes them from their competitors, in trying to be the best and most important for their customers.

*We may, thus, make the following conclusion: Those companies, which effectively utilize marketing opportunities, are those, which maintain good relations with consumers, and develop their marketing culture, based on societal and consumer values and expectations.*

### **3. Dimensions of Marketing Culture Determining Competitive Advantage**

Growing sensitivity, dynamism, uncertainty and aggression (aspects of changing competitions) call for new competitive methods (Ruhli 1996). The only way of obtaining competitive advantage is through the provision of innovations and added value for the consumer. In order to gain a significant advantage, a company must integrate

many activities and create a unique product which competitors would find difficult or infeasible to imitate.

Marketing activity becomes especially important for companies, which strive to secure higher demand for the products, with the existence of large market supply, competition and the availability of many goods of similar quality. Drucker (1973) one of the leading theoreticians of management, states that the *objective of marketing is to recognize and understand the consumer in such a way, as the goods or services offered exactly meet the demands and expectations of the consumer and essentially sell themselves.*

From 1980 onwards, traditional marketing methods such as segmentation, positioning and customer support are no longer sufficient. The concept of marketing has been augmented with an orientation not only toward individual consumer needs, but toward society in general, moving toward a social-ethical concept of marketing.

The improvement of market segmentation and target market selection methods reflects the *movement of marketing activity and view toward the consumer from a product to a marketing orientation.* When the market is not saturated with goods, companies may offer uniform products, which lower production costs and which would satisfy the majority of consumer needs, however, after a while, consumer expectations rise. Consumers are no longer satisfied with standard goods, and require uniqueness. Society becomes more fragmented; consumer income, attitudes and lifestyles are not uniform. Alongside societal fragmentation, technological advancements allow for the creation of goods, directed toward smaller market segments. Different consumers in the market may behave differently and value goods

and their alternatives differently, thus, the company, which is based on a marketing orientation, must gear its selection toward each specific consumer need. Very few companies actually attain the goal of satisfying individual consumer needs. Instead, they try to satisfy the needs of small consumer groups. Purchasing behaviour indices, such as social, economic group and income, more and more often prove unreliable, as they do not reveal variations in purchasing behaviour between groups. Thus, we must search for new indicators, related to consumer attitudes and culture.

Thus, in analyzing marketing culture as a source of competitive advantage, the following are seen as important regarding the concept of marketing:

- 1) *Satisfying the needs and interests of consumers,*
- 2) *The view of marketing as a general company goal, the attainment of which depends on the combined efforts, structural and organizational cooperation of all of the departments,*
- 3) *A profit-orientation, as the final results of the first two elements.*

Analysis of marketing cultural values for increasing company competitiveness should be based on marketing theory, which reflects issues of company profitability, competitiveness (*as a company goal*), orientation toward the consumer (*as necessary conditions for goal attainment*) and a systems view (*as a means for attaining the goal*). Thus, marketing cultural values should be based on the following:

- The company depends on its environment.
- The environment influences the company.
- The company must analyze, research and react to environmental influences.
- The company is necessary for satisfaction of consumer needs and expectations.

- Satisfaction of consumer needs and expectations creates long-term profitability, competitiveness and protects the company from bankruptcy.

The *values of marketing culture*, such as open communication and employee responsibility, as emphasized by Webster (1993), in our opinion, most strengthen the company's market orientation. It is likely, that those companies, in which the main marketing cultural value is *open communication*, will have a strong market orientation, as market information is disseminated throughout the entire organization. *Employee responsibility* as a main marketing cultural value creates conditions for decentralized decision-making, in this way facilitating faster market orientation processes.

For these reasons, the following marketing cultural values, facilitating market orientation are:

- 1) **Open communication,**
- 2) **Employee responsibility.**

Marketing cultural values, unlike market orientation norms (rules), do not have any direct influence on organizational behaviour in the market, but facilitate the development of a market orientation.

**Marketing cultural norms (rules).** Norms (rules) are formed in society and in smaller groups as preferred behaviour, which oblige one to follow the rules set by the group. Marketing cultural norms (rules) may be revealed as values, through the means by which the norms are manifest in marketing activity. A norm is like an idea, which exists in the minds of group members and requires certain behaviour of them (Shein 1992). Norms (rules) create a special code of conduct for a certain group and dictate behaviour, which determines the activities of the group (Homburg and Pflesser 2000). Norms must be accepted by members of the group for them to function.

One of the most important aspects of marketing culture is to maintain *relations between the company and consumer*. From this point of view communication attains a special meaning. And based on former experiences and marketing cultural values, various norms of communication take shape. *With increasing competition, communication between the consumer and company changes* as the company, as a profit-seeking entity, has the goal of attracting as many consumers as possible, and this goal is not always the most effective method from the point of view of consumers and competitors. In order to avoid this problem, *it is necessary to understand the main norms (rules) of behaviour between the consumer and the company, the essence of which is the avoidance of wrongful or harmful transfer of information*.

**Marketing culture norms facilitate market-oriented company behaviour.** When organizational members share the common value of open communication, the specific norm associated with this value is *open communication regarding market-related issues*. As another example, employee responsibility for market activities is a norm, related to the value of employee responsibility. Based on these values, facilitating a market orientation, the main marketing cultural norms would be the following:

- 1) **Open communication regarding market-related issues;**
- 2) **Employee responsibility for market activities.**

**Marketing culture means** are the manifest layer of culture, the components of which may either be verbal, behavioural or physical (Homburg and Pflesser 2000). Marketing culture means have been most analyzed in the marketing literature of all the layers of marketing culture, however, in this paper it is postulated, that marketing culture means are more, than,

for example, informational systems (Kohli and Jaworski 1990). They are the sum of physical and verbal means, used in marketing activities.

It would be impossible to present a full list of marketing culture means, as certain means may be revealed only within a certain context. However, according to Homburg and Pflesser (2000), four main elements may be distinguished in a market-oriented marketing culture: **stories, agreements, rituals and language**.

Means reveal the level of market-orientation, from lower to higher. Stories may be related to employee conversations about other employees, the behaviour of which is market-oriented. A market-oriented agreement example may be open and friendly acceptance of consumers. A market-oriented ritual may be activities for consumers, such as meetings with product manufacturers or consumer-oriented employee awards. The final mean is language, used within the company, which may also depict the level of market-orientation. For example, consumer-oriented discussions (as opposed to internal company problems), during meetings show a higher level of market-orientation.

Kohli and Jaworski (1990) distinguished three market-oriented components of behaviour to define marketing culture behaviour:

- 1) Creation of market intelligence;
- 2) Dissemination of market intelligence;
- 3) Reaction to market intelligence.

Intelligence is the ability to properly guess, based on required information and an individual or organizational culture (Jucevičius 1999). The main feature of intelligence is an orientation towards the future. In this way competitive advantage is not created from knowledge of past events, but the ability to foresee the future. With reference to Lafferty and Hult (2001), the creation of market intelligence,

its dissemination and company reaction to it, shows that it is not only important for the company to react to changes in the market, adapt to them and attempt to satisfy consumer needs (reaction to market intelligence), but the company must also develop and offer innovations (market intelligence dissemination), prepare consumers for innovations (market intelligence creation) and in this way seek advantages over the competition, higher sales, and profits (through the creation of a market leader or market innovator image).

Parasuraman (1986) argue that only a valuable, rare and not simply imitated company culture may be a source of sustainable competitive advantage. Homburg and Pflesser (2000) demonstrate in their studies that organizational culture influences company activity. Thus, based on the definition of marketing culture (that marketing culture is a component of organizational culture), we may assert that *marketing culture influences company market activity*. It is our opinion, that of the four layers of marketing culture, behaviour has the largest direct influence on company market activity results. Values, norms and means do not have as strong a direct influence on the results of company market activities.

Marketing culture unites the individual efforts of employees toward common goals, in developing added value for consumers, which in turn guarantees company assertiveness, compared to the competition. It is likely, that marketing culture will better assist the company in satisfying consumer needs and expectations, maintain consumer loyalty, attract new consumers, in this way helping the company to achieve desired profit growth and secure its desired market share.

Loyal customers may increase company profitability through the reduction of sales costs, lower activity expenses and higher price

tolerability. It must be mentioned that company profitability and competitiveness are not synonymous. In seeking to reveal the influence of marketing culture on company competitiveness, attention must be given not only to profit indicators, but also to consumer and market share indicators. These are:

- Attainment of consumer needs satisfaction;
- Maintenance of current consumers;
- Attraction of new customers;
- Attainment of desired profit growth;
- Attainment of desired market share.

In analyzing the influence of marketing culture on a company's competitiveness, we must look at the changes in the market, which have influence on company activities. Market changes may be related to all the macro-environments of marketing: economic, social-cultural, political-legal, scientific-technological and natural. However, with a change in any one of these areas, companies working in at least the affected area will be affected as well, and this therefore does not have direct impact on company competitiveness. It must also be taken into account that the company does not have the ability to control its environment. Thus, the main emphasis, in assessing changes in the market, is placed on the competitive environment (marketing micro-environment), as changes here will have the most influence on the competitiveness of the competition. This element is also important because certain actions of competitors affect the company, thus the company must react to competitor actions. The greater the change in the competitive environment, the more the company must react and take action, if it wishes to maintain or strengthen its own position.

In markets, in which changes in the competitive environment are stable, an average degree of market-orientation is sufficient for maintaining

satisfaction of customer needs. The influence of marketing culture on company activity results is greater in those markets, in which there is more turbulence in the competitive environment.

Thus, in summarizing the characteristics of the development of marketing culture under increasing competitive conditions, it is concluded that this depends on two main factors:

- 1) The values, norms, means and behaviours, which are market-oriented and comprise the marketing culture;
- 2) Factors, which influence the ability for the marketing culture to dominate among other subcultures (factors, which influence the domination of the marketing culture, require deeper understanding).

## Conclusions

In analyzing marketing culture, societal, business and organizational cultures were defined and addressed, as were marketing under changing competition and the importance of marketing culture in seeking competitive advantage. This analysis led to the following conclusions:

- 1) Marketing culture is analyzed as an inseparable component of organizational culture, by highlighting the specific character of marketing culture through the revelation of com-

ponents, characteristic of marketing culture;

- 2) The layers of marketing culture (values, norms, means and behaviour) are distinguished, based on analogous layers of organizational culture (manifest culture, values and common agreements);
- 3) The main factors determining marketing culture are: common values of the organization, which guarantee a market-orientation, globalization, which takes into account consumer needs and priorities, based on cultural differences, and societal culture, which determine consumer buying behaviour;
- 4) The components of marketing culture (according to the main layers), sustain market-orientation of all of the company's activities. These components are the following:
  - Marketing cultural values, which maintain the company's market-orientation (open communication and employee responsibility);
  - Marketing culture norms (open communication regarding market-related issues, and employee responsibility for market activity);
  - Marketing culture means (stories, agreements, rituals and language);
  - Components of marketing culture behaviour (creation, dissemination of and reaction to market intelligence);
- 5) An appropriate marketing culture secures competitive advantages for the company.

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## RINKODAROS KULTŪROS FORMAVIMASIS IR JOS DIMENSIJOS ŠIUOLAIKINĖS KONKURENCIJOS SĄLYGOMIS

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S a n t r a u k a

Įmonės, siekdamos išsilaikyti rinkoje, ieško konkurencinių pranašumų. Deja, šiuolaikinėmis konkurencijos sąlygomis jau nepakanka vien tradicinių pranašumų, tokių kaip žemesnė kaina, gražesnė ar patogesnė prekės pakuotė ir kt., nes konkurentai gana greitai tokius pranašumus gali nukopijuoti. Reikia tokių pranašumų, kurie nebūtų lengvai nukopijuojami ir vartotojų būtų vertinami kaip išskirtinis įmonės veiklos bruožas. Tokį konkurencinį išskirtinumą įmonei rinkoje ir ypač bendraujant su vartotojais gali suteikti rinkodaros kultūra.

Straipsnyje siekiama atskleisti rinkodaros kultūros esmę per įmonės (organizacijos) kultūros ir rinkodaros sąveiką ir atsakyti į klausimus: kas yra rinkodaros kultūra, kokie pagrindiniai jos komponentai, tų dimensijos ir kaip rinkodaros kultūra sukuria prielaidas įmonei išlikti konkurencingai?

**Straipsnio tikslas** – moksliniu požiūriu atskleidžiant įmonės rinkodaros kultūros ištakas, sukongretinant jos komponentus, struktūrą ir lemiančius veiksnius išryškinti rinkodaros kultūros dimensijas, sukuriančias konkurencinius pranašumus.

**Pagrindinis tyrimo metodas** – mokslinės literatūros analizė rinkodaros kultūros klausimais, fragmentiškų žinių apie įvairius nagrinėjamas problemas aspektus sintezė.

Nagrinėjant rinkodaros kultūrą apsiribojama pagrindinių kultūros komponentų, turinčių didžiausią įtaką rinkodaros veiklai, analize, taip pat siekiama išsiaiškinti rinkodaros kultūros įtaką įmonės konkurencingumui. Šiuo tyrimu nebuvo siekiama išnagrinėti visų rinkodaros kultūros komponentų visose rinkodaros veiklos srityse.

Straipsnį sudaro trys dalys. Pirmoje dalyje atskleidžiama rinkodaros kultūros samprata, apžvelgiamos rinkodaros kultūros formavimosi ištakos, formuluojamas apibrėžimas. Antroje – nagrinėjami rinkodaros kultūrą lemiantys veiksniai kintančiomis konkurencijos sąlygomis. Trečioje – pateikiamos rinkodaros kultūros dimensijos, sukuriančios konkurencinius pranašumus.

Tiriant rinkodaros kultūrą įvertinta ir visuomenės, verslo, įmonės (organizacijos) kultūra; rinkodara kintančiomis konkurencijos sąlygomis ir rinkodaros kultūros reikšmė, siekiant konkurencinių pranašumų. Tyrimas leido padaryti tokias išvadas:

- 1) rinkodaros kultūra analizuojama kaip sudedamoji įmonės (organizacijos) kultūros dalis, išryškinant rinkodaros kultūros specifiškumą per rinkodaros kultūrai būdingus kultūros komponentus;
- 2) rinkodaros kultūros sluoksniai (vertybės, normos (taisyklės), priemonės ir elgsena) išskiriami remiantis analogiškais organizacijos kultūros tyrimo sluoksniais (matoma kultūra, persidengiančios vertybės, bendri susitarimai);
- 3) pagrindiniai rinkodaros kultūrą lemiantys veiksniai yra šie: įmonės kultūros vertybės, kurios užtikrina orientaciją į rinką; globalizacija, kuri įvertina vartotojų poreikius ir prioritetus atsižvelgiant į rinkų kultūros skirtumus; visuomenės kultūra, kuri lemia sprendimą pirkti ar nepirkti;
- 4) rinkodaros kultūros dimensijos (atskleistos remiantis pagrindiniais komponentais), lemiančios konkurencinius pranašumus, palaiko visos įmonės veiklos orientaciją į rinką. Pagrindinės įmonės rinkodaros kultūros komponentų dimensijos:
  - rinkodaros kultūros vertybės, palaikančios orientaciją į rinką (atviras bendravimas ir darbuotojų atsakomybė);
  - rinkodaros kultūros normos (taisyklės) (atviras bendravimas su rinka susijusiais klausimais ir darbuotojų atsakomybė už veiklą rinkoje);
  - rinkodaros kultūros priemonės (pasakojimai, susitarimai, ritualai ir kalba);
  - rinkodaros kultūros elgsenos komponentai (inteligentiškos rinkos kūrimas, skleidimas, reaguojimas į inteligentišką rinką);
- 5) įmonės rinkodaros kultūra garantuoja jai konkurencinius pranašumus.