

DECISIONS ABOUT CREATIVE ADVERTISING STRATEGY: DECISION-MAKING METHODS AND THEIR APPLICABILITY

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The article analyzes the creative advertising strategy (hereinafter –CAS) decision-making process including the methods used for selection of CAS and the scope of their application. Special attention is devoted to identification and classification of criteria for CAS decision-making. As CAS decisions are made through interaction between the advertising agency and the advertiser, the existing CAS selection methods are evaluated from the perspectives of both subjects of this interaction. The need for accommodation of the two sets of interests is emphasized. The article provides recommendations concerning application of CAS decision-making methods.

Keywords: creative advertising strategy, advertising agency, advertiser, decision-making.

Introduction

An appropriate creative advertising strategy¹ (hereinafter – CAS) allows increasing the effectiveness of advertising with relatively little financial investment. Therefore this is a highly relevant topic for two main players in the advertising market – the advertising agency and the advertiser.

The selection and implementation of the particular CAS is a complex and highly risky process. Such decision requires careful consideration of multiple business operation aspects, such as possible benefit, risk, competition, as well as future plans, expectations, wishes, interests, capacities of the advertising agency and the advertiser.

The problem is further compounded by the subject of decision making itself. CAS is a complex and understudied subject.

The object of the research is the theoretical and practical aspects of the CAS evaluation process.

The scientific-practical problem studied is systematization of CAS decision-making methods, evaluation of their applicability to CAS decision-

¹ In the present article, a creative advertising strategy is defined as part of general advertising strategy formed in cooperation by the advertiser and the advertising agency. Creative advertising strategy is defined as a complex of interrelated organizational and creative decisions aimed at presenting product or service, conveying brand position, influencing consumer and distinguished by the catalyst effect. The result of the CAS is the advertising message.

making, as well as the problems of nature, number and compatibility of evaluation and selection criteria. In practice, CAS decisions are often made intuitively, i. e. on the basis of personal experience and the opinion of the decision maker, rather than on the basis of scientific management decision-making methods. In some cases the decision-making method may prove to be successful, however, subjective factors often shade the economic validity and rational aspects of a particular decision. From the scientific point of view, CAS decisions may be made using many different methods (both general and specific), however, there are no research or recommendations concerning practical application of such methods. The problem of method selection is further compounded by abundance of evaluation criteria, what makes it even more difficult to consider all possible alternatives in order to avoid contradiction of criteria, as well as to evaluate their significance and to set priorities. In this article, author concentrates her attention on the CAS management aspects, leaving creative aspects beyond the area of this particular article.

Increasing importance of CAS as well as costs of wrong decisions call for a deeper analysis of both theoretical and practical aspects of the problem and highlight the relevance of the present study.

Purpose of the article – to propose decision-making methods and criteria for CAS decision-making.

To achieve this purpose, specialized literature on CAS is analyzed. The analysis is extended to the Theory of Decision-Making, evaluating its applicability to CAS decision-making. On the basis of literature review, advantages and disadvantages of the existing methods are highlighted and opportunities for improvement of the decision-making process are identified.

The theoretical aspects of CAS have received scant attention in related scientific literature

abroad. In Lithuania, both its theoretical and practical aspects are neglected. Such insufficiency of attention may be explained by the complexity of interaction between ordinary business and creative activity, the difficulty of assessing the impact of creativity on product distinctiveness and competitiveness, and, finally, by the narrow specialization and standard thinking of theoretical writers.

Scientific literature devotes a lot of attention to the Theory of Decision-Making. The subject has been intensely studied by both foreign authors, such as Keen P., Yetes J.F., Day G., Drucker P., Kerzner H., Mintzberg H., Quinn J.B., Ghoshal S., etc. and by Lithuanian authors, including Puškorius S., Skyrius R., Seilius A., etc. There has been little scientific research on the subject of the methods of creative advertising strategy decision making. Individual aspects of the problem had been analyzed in the general literature on creative advertising strategy (Jewler A.J., Drewniany B.L., Rossiter J.R., Percy L., Russel J.T., Lane R.W., Miller A., Low G. S., Mohr J. J., Russel J.T., Lane R.W., etc.), however, there has been no exclusive studies analyzing the CAS decision-making process and methods. Therefore, the topic of the present article is both new and relevant.

Structure of the article. Analysis of the existing scientific literature and empirical research outcomes are used. The result of the empirical research provides the author with both qualitative and quantitative information about the situation in the Lithuanian advertising market and thus adds to the theoretical material on the subject.

The article starts with the presentation of the empirical research methodology. The second paragraph of the article meets two purposes: presents the characteristics of CAS decision-making process (general, and specific for the

Lithuanian market) and indicates problems appearing in this process.

The third part of the article is devoted to problem solving. Author presents and analyses decision-making methods suitable for CAS decision-making. By doing this, author attempts to eliminate the lack of information on methods to be used while making CAS decisions, as well as indicates the limitations of some of the methods and provides with the proposals on how to solve them.

Conclusions are made at the end of the article.

Hypothesis of the article. The author claims that without clearly indicating the existing CAS selection methods, Lithuanian advertisers and advertising agencies make decisions based on their personal experiences and intuition. Therefore, a detailed presentation of the methods, followed by the analysis of their limitations and advantages, together with the overall evaluation of the methods and recommendations on their use, would help to improve CAS decision quality and decrease the costs of the wrong CAS decisions.

1. Method

The CAS decision-making process used by both advertisers and advertising agencies in Lithuania has been assessed in a causal-descriptive market research. The two methods used for this study included in-depth interviews with experts and questionnaire survey.

In-depth interviews were conducted in March–April 2005. Two types of experts took part in the interviews – those representing the perspective of advertising agencies and those representing the perspective of advertisers. The subjects selected for this study were people occupying managerial positions in large Lithuanian and

foreign capital companies working in the field of advertising and marketing. A version of the snowball method was used for sampling; both a representative of the advertising agency and its client had been interviewed. Such methodology allowed for assessment of the reliability of expert opinions.

In-depth interviews contained questions related with the collection of qualitative information about CAS decision-making process, cooperation of the advertiser and the advertising agency, CAS decision methods used in practice, and problems appearing during the process.

Questionnaire survey was conducted in May 2005, using surveying in person and e-mailing of questionnaires. Survey questionnaires were sent to respondents by e-mail, and later they were instructed during a phone conversation or in-personal interview. Such method of interviewing was selected to improve the reliability and thoroughness of the results and to make the data collection more respondent-friendly. The respondents were selected on the basis of the data provided by both the business newspaper “Verslo žinios” supplement “Lithuanian Business Leaders” and information provided by the communication agency association KOMMA, indicating that 27 advertising agencies consider themselves to be a creative boutique. The chosen method of survey was very extensive. Twenty advertising agencies agreed to participate in the survey, which embraced 74 per cent of the whole population. While filling questionnaires, representatives of the advertising agencies indicated advertisers who also could take part in the study. As only six representatives of advertisers participated in the study, an additional sample of advertisers was sought and 14 more respondents were surveyed. In all cases, the respondents were managers or creative directors of advertising agencies and marketing or product managers

who represented advertisers. Therefore, they had all rights and competence to discuss the questions related to CAS decisions and methods.

Survey questions were connected with the following issues: understanding of CAS, interaction between advertiser and agency while making CAS decisions, the methods used, existing problems and suggestions for improving the process.

Also, methods of secondary data grouping, comparative analysis and literature overview were used in the current research.

2. Characteristics of CAS decision-making

CAS decision is management decision of administrative nature, characterized by high uncertainty and risk stemming from the nature of the object of the decision. Risk of decision-making may become manifested in the longer-term perspective as a risk to deform brand position in the mind of consumers (Blech, Blech, 2004).

On the other hand, CAS decision is a group management decision with characteristic features. First, this kind of decision-making is distinguished by the fact that the participants are a group of people coming not from the same organization, but from two different economic entities – advertising agency and advertiser. Though theoretically both groups should act in pursuit of a common result, in reality both shared and conflicting interests are at play, particularly the financial and the informational ones (Кафланджиев, 2005).

The second problem is organization of cooperation between group members, division of responsibility, and creation of a system of delegation and information distribution.

The third problem is related to differences in competence, knowledge, and education of the participants in the decision-making process,

which makes communication among the participants more difficult.

Another peculiarity of the CAS decision-making process is that both participants in the decision-making process are represented not by a single person but by a group of persons, which makes it not a typical decision, but of “a group in a group” type. The CAS decision-making process involves three main stages: a need for CAS, development of CAS options, and making of a decision concerning the best CAS. The article focuses on the last stage in the decision-making process, in which decisions concerning methods and criteria of selection are made and such methods and criteria are used to select the best CAS option. During this stage, both parties of the decision-making process – the advertising agency and the advertiser – have to decide on decision-making methods to be used. It should be emphasized that the use of rational decision-making methods is not widespread among practitioners in the field. Most market players tend to make decisions intuitively, i. e., on the basis of personal experience and opinion.

It is often unclear whether the selected option is economically sound and rational or it is just a product of momentary subjective perception of the current situation, the results of which cannot be assessed.

Results of the questionnaire survey confirmed domination of the intuitive decision-making method: 31 per cent of advertising agency representatives and 31 per cent of advertiser representatives made CAS decisions on the basis of their intuition. Also prevalent is the use of subjective structured methods, such as a system of evaluation criteria and correspondence of CAS to the objectives. However, these are often based on the results of previous advertising campaigns. Only 15.4 per cent of advertising agencies and 11.5 per cent of advertisers make decisions on the basis of rational scientific methods (see Table 1).

Table 1. CAS decision-making methods used by advertising agency and advertiser in Lithuania

Advertising agency		%
No answer	1	3.8
Subjective	8	30.8
Rational scientific decision-making methods	4	15.4
On results of the previous advertising campaigns	4	15.4
System of evaluation criteria	4	15.4
I don't know	4	15.4
Correspondence to the objectives.	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0
Advertiser		%
Subjective	8	30.8
Rational scientific decision-making methods	3	11.5
No answer	9	34.6
System of evaluation criteria	3	11.5
Correspondence to the objectives	2	7.7
On results of the previous advertising campaigns	1	3.8
Total	26	100.0

Furthermore, advertising market players lack knowledge about the existing decision-making methods and possibilities for their application. Another problem is that the advertising partners (advertising agency and advertiser) do not know what methods and criteria are used for CAS decision-making by the company of their partners. This problem was indicated by 85 per cent of our subjects.

Therefore, the dominant subjective CAS decision-making method results in a) higher risk of wrong decision, as it is based on the subjective opinion and taste; such decision completely depends on the decision maker's competence and intuition and thus does not have any objective base for estimating its economic effect; b) it is increasingly complicated to coordinate and manage true opinions of advertiser and advertising agency.

The experts who took part in the research named two main reasons why the decision-making methods are rarely used in CAS decisions: a) the lack of knowledge about the existing meth-

ods; b) the limitations of the methods, which the advertisers professionals experienced in practice, such as: the application of decision-making methods requires additional time and financial investments, as well as they cannot be used while evaluating innovative and unique CAS. Therefore, the results of the empirical research confirmed the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the article; moreover, it added some additional insights to the problem.

It is thought that a wider usage of existing decision making methods for CAS decisions would improve the quality of decisions, as well as the cooperation between the advertiser and the advertising agency.

In the next part of the article, the methods applicable for CAS decision-making are presented and the scope of their application is discussed.

3. Methods for CAS decision making

In the present section we will discuss the existing methods for CAS decisions-making, and

evaluate their suitability and improvement prospects. The aim of this part is to introduce the existing decision-making methods which can be adopted for CAS decisions and to indicate the advantages and limitations of the methods as well as to propose ways of their usage for making CAS decisions in practice.

Before we start analyzing existing CAS decision-making methods, let us discuss the general methods of collective decision-making.

Collective decisions may be made using one of the six methods: analytical, rule-based, automatic, modeling, mediation, and consultation (Yates, 2004). The latter two methods are related to participation of external consultancies in the decision-making process; therefore, usually they are not used in the CAS decision-making. Consequently, below we will discuss the four remaining methods and assess their appropriateness to the object of our analysis.

The analytical method: analytical decisions are made voluntarily, purposefully, arguments are reviewed to support conclusions and to evaluate importance of various factors.

The rule-based method: this method is rule-oriented – “if C condition is present, stick with the option A”. When a decision is made following the rules, decision-makers seek to review and coordinate certain conditions of the situation to predict the decision concerning the action. The actions are executed as prescribed by rules. This method may be applied when evaluating standard advertising options or options with precedents. It is necessary to evaluate the context-sensitivity of CAS, variability of consumer opinions and attitudes, and prediction difficulties. The aforementioned reasons set limits for the application of this method.

Automatic decision: the decision is made without any effort, it comes about automatically, and the result of the action is not controlled. This

method is often used in the practice of making decisions about creative advertising strategy: representatives of the advertising agency and the advertiser select the CAS on the basis of their subjective tastes and “like/dislike” criterion. A number of factors may contribute to the use of this method: treatment of advertising creation process as uncontrollable one, a need for a speedy decision-making, and overestimation of personal intuition.

Modeling: when using this method, a decision-maker assembles a team which solves the problem in accordance with some adopted model and acts in the manner prescribed by the model (Yates, 2004).

In the practice of CAS decision-making, a combination of models rather than a single model is often used. For example, intuitive decisions, which prevail in the Lithuanian advertising market, are made using structured subjective methods, as exemplified by decisions made on the basis of results of previous advertising campaigns. Such complex methods may be categorized into two groups:

- *CAS decision-making methods based on a system of evaluation criteria*
- *Alternative CAS decision-making methods.*

3.1. CAS decision-making methods based on a system of evaluation criteria

CAS decision-making based on evaluation criteria consists of two stages: (a) determination of CAS evaluation criteria and (b) selection of a method of evaluation of conformity of CAS to those criteria (CAS evaluation method). The latter methods may be categorized into three main groups: CAS evaluation based on the target consumer research results, CAS evaluation based on objective quantitative methods, and CAS evaluation based on subjective methods.

3.1.1. Determination of CAS evaluation criteria

An objective system of evaluation criteria facilitates and structures the decision-making process. Theorists recommend formulating the system of evaluation criteria in the following stages:

1. Drawing a list of evaluation criteria.
2. Formulation of a system of evaluation criteria.
3. Establishing a hierarchy of evaluation criteria (Puškorius, 2001).

In practice, particularly in the analysis of subjective methods of decision-making, it is often noted that decision-makers stop at the first stage, i. e., they draw just a list of evaluation criteria rather than form a system of criteria. A list of evaluation criteria represents the simplest system, the components of which are not hierarchically related. Usually decision-makers limit themselves to a list of evaluation criteria for the following reasons: lack of time, problems with quantification of criteria and with forming of a scale (Yates, 2004).

Such list shall include all evaluation criteria related to the final purpose of the operation. Such criteria shall cover all main factors affecting the final result. The problem of selection of criteria is a very difficult one as the accuracy of the final solution depends on the selection of criteria. When selecting the criteria, the operational parameters to be evaluated are established and factors affecting these parameters are identified.

The problem of CAS option evaluation criteria has two aspects. First, there is the problem of the quantity of evaluation criteria: what is the optimal number of evaluation criteria? Empirical studies indicate that 6–7 criteria are usually used for selection of CAS option. This number is similar to the one recommended in the scientific literature (Wells, et al., 2001; Blech, Blech, 2004; Jewler, Drewniany, 2001; Albers-Miller, Stafford, 1998).

Respondents often give the same coefficient of importance to different criteria, what indicates the lack of criteria prioritizing.

The second problem is the content of criteria. It is complicated by the fact that different authors recommend different criteria for CAS decision-making. Furthermore, the criteria suggested vary in the depth of assessment provided by different authors. The criteria identified in the literature are presented in Fig. 1.

The first group of criteria is designed for evaluation of CAS correspondence to the advertising and marketing objectives. This is the most general treatment of the problem based on the place of creative strategy within the hierarchy of business objectives (Bogart, 1884; Blech, Blech, 2004). This perspective also provides the basis for the second CAS evaluation criterion – correspondence of CAS to the positioning strategy formulated by the advertiser (Jewler, Drewniany, 2001; Wells et al., 2001; Rossiter, Percy, 2001).

In this case the question is whether the CAS fulfils its direct function, that is, whether it expresses and conveys the positioning strategy. Such aspects of evaluation are conceptual and fundamental. Furthermore, they relate the CAS to the market, the product, and the competitive environment.

The criteria describing CAS as a means of information transfer are also important. These include speed, clarity, absence of direct links to the product, references to target characteristics via cues, absence of incidental associations, and relatedness to the brand (Rossiter, Percy, 2001).

These criteria allow evaluating whether the advertising message is effective enough to perform the two main functions: (a) express the desired information, and (b) convey it to the consumer promptly and precisely. The first aspect is close to marketing, i. e. it evaluates prom-

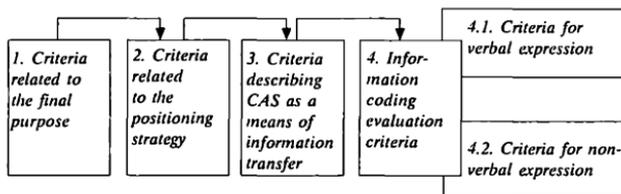


Fig. 1. CAS evaluation criteria groups (by the author)

ises given to the consumer, their clarity, validity, and consistency. The second aspect represents evaluation of the creative aspect of the CRS, whether or not it is able to:

- penetrate the competitive context and attract attention of the consumer. In this case the validity is defined by the ROY formula. This formula includes three main CAS effectiveness indicators: relevance, originality, and impact (Wells, Burett, Moriarty, 2001);
- facilitate, catalyze consumer's perception. The effectiveness of the CAS is evaluated through links between metaphors and indirect associations with motivation and needs of the consumer.

The criteria of CAS as a conductor are intimately related to another group: information coding evaluation criteria. Information coding evaluation involves two dimensions: criteria for evaluation of non-verbal and verbal expression, criteria for evaluation of effect of non-verbal and verbal elements (Rossiter, Percy, 2001).

Criteria for evaluation of non-verbal and verbal expression are actually identical to the main criteria for evaluation of art and include the following:

- a) novelty of idea and expression
- b) integrity of the composition
- c) transformation
- d) universality
- e) longevity.

To these criteria we may also assign the congruence of the solution to the planned media means. However, the aforementioned criteria are more closely related to the artistic aspect of advertising creation and are closer to linguistics and design rather than to the science of management.

The second group of criteria reflects the impact on the consumer and provides for evaluation of factors affecting consumer's emotions and stimulating desirable activity of the consumer. Various authors (Rossiter, Percy, Bell, Newmann, etc.) identify over thirty criteria to evaluate the emotional aspect of an advertising message. Thorough analysis of all of these criteria is beyond the scope of the present paper; however, we will provide the model (Table 2) based on scientific studies of those criteria. The model identified three main dimensions for evaluation of emotionality, their indicators and categories (Hecker, Stewart, 1998).

Analysis of the literature revealed that the result of CAS depends on a variety of parameters. The system depicted in Fig. 1 is based on the principle of logical consecution, i. e. criteria are sequenced according to their importance, from the essential to the peculiar ones. It is natural that the multitude of evaluation criteria complicates the decision-making process in terms of time required to adopt the decision. Furthermore, it is very difficult to establish priorities

Table 2. Emotional impact evaluation criteria (Hecker, Stewart, 1998)

Dimension	Indicator	Category
Satisfaction	Trust Love, passion Gratitude	Reliable, spiritual Nice, passionate, friendly Grateful, valued
Excitement	Interest Activity Lightness	Interested, curious Active, admiring Playful, relaxed, light
Domination	Sadness Fear Skepticism	Sad, nervous Scared, irritated Skeptical, distrustful

among the criteria, and sometimes this is altogether impossible. Another problem faced by a decision-making team is a contradiction among certain criteria. Evaluation criteria often not only complement each other but contradict. The aforementioned problems require to think about the formulation of the CAS evaluation criteria system on the basis of the compatibility principle rather than on the principle of hierarchy. Such principle of criteria matching would be easier to apply for decision-makers. Furthermore, it may be hypothesized that such model would optimize the decision-making process.

The problems of abundance and compatibility of criteria were also identified in an empirical study.

As a result of the study, seven most often used criteria were identified: reflection of brand characteristics, correspondence to advertising objectives, conveyance of the positioning strategy, relation to the general advertising strategy, clarity, relevance to the target segment, and presentation of the product. The evaluation criteria used cover all levels of theoretical criteria and are related to factors affecting the effectiveness of the CAS.

The empirical study highlighted another problem – the difference between the sets of criteria used by the advertising agency and by the advertiser. Within the advertising agency, decisions about CAS options are made on the basis of con-

sensus between the project manager and the creative staff. The project manager's opinion is dominant. The client is presented with one or two creative options. The options to be presented to the client are selected using the following criteria:

- Will the client like the CAS, will he buy it?
- Does the CAS conform to the creative brief and fit the purposes of advertising?
- Does the CAS conform to the criteria of novelty and originality?
- Will the CAS be distinctive in the context of other CAS existing on the market?

Marketing department staff is usually participating in the process of advertising, evaluating and selecting the CAS. The client evaluates CAS options on the basis of the following criteria:

- Will the CAS be helpful in reaching the goals?
- Is it original, distinctive?
- What financial resources are required for its implementation?
- Is it flexible and promising?

Summarizing the evaluation criteria used by advertising agencies and advertiser, we must note that the evaluation criteria used by the advertising agency is advertiser – rather than consumer-oriented. Therefore, the process of CAS generation, evaluation, and implementation is not consistently focused on the consumer, but rather has

two focuses – the advertiser (from the perspective of the advertising agency) and the consumer. Stemming from the advertising agency's desire to sell the CAS effectively, such orientation promotes agreement with opinions of the advertiser and conformity to his subjective characteristics, stereotypes, and attitudes. This way the focus is moved away from the center of advertising – the opinion of the consumer.

3.1.2. Selection of CAS evaluation method

After establishing the list of CAS evaluation criteria, the decision-makers should decide how conformity of CAS to the aforementioned criteria will be evaluated. Depending on the source of evaluation, the evaluation methods may be divided into two main groups: (a) evaluation on the basis of opinions of the target segment and (b) CAS evaluation by the decision-maker him/herself. The latter method shall be applied on the basis of objective quantitative methods or on the basis of subjective methods.

Methodologies based on opinions of the target segment rely on results of quantitative and qualitative consumer research. The research is aimed at establishing whether or not the CAS conforms to the relevant evaluation criteria. Representatives of the target segment participate in the research, therefore the aforementioned criteria are collected using indirect methods. The optimal solution is considered the solution evaluated by the target group as the best (Davis, 1997; Miller, 2003).

The most widely used qualitative method is focus group. Participants in the focus group are introduced to CAS options (simultaneously) and they comment and discuss each option immediately after seeing it.

Another option is to use quantitative research. The most widely used method is individual interview conducted with members of the target

audience. The sample size should reach about 50–70 subjects. Despite a small sample size, such survey allows predicting consumer attitudes, as it provides for evaluation of strong and weak sides of advertising. The pilot option of CAS presented to subjects may be unfinished, but they shall be prepared for evaluation: drawings shall be used for evaluation of printed advertising, while sample commercials shall be used for evaluation of radio and television advertising.

Questionnaire survey allows collecting quantitative data. Furthermore, larger sample sizes provide for generalizability of the data. Advantages and disadvantages of quantitative and qualitative methods are presented in Table 3.

Most of contemporary authors agree that the main problem related to CAS decision making relying on the basis of consumer research results is not the price or time but the fact that such methods are better suited for making decisions about standard, inconspicuous ideas. This stems out of psychological characteristics of consumers – it is easy to accept familiar things, while new, bold and non-standard CAS are often rejected as a result of focus groups or quantitative research. CAS selection gains a rational basis, but this also leads towards an increasing similarity of advertising materials, which finally results in a problem of retraction of consumer's attention (Davis, 1997; Jewler, Drewniany, 2001)

CAS decision-making methodologies based on evaluation of decision-makers. As already mentioned, these methods may be subjective, i. e. based on personal experience, intuition, and taste of participants in the decision making process, who decide whether or not the CAS meets the criteria. Such decision may be reached in an unstructured manner or using a decision tree. This method is based on the assumption that all solutions and their interrelations shall be identified

Table 3. Comparison of quantitative and qualitative methods (design by the author following Davis, 1997)

Qualitative methods (focus group)		Quantitative methods (questionnaire survey)	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Fast	Only the first option of CAS is evaluated objectively; other options are evaluated in comparison to the first option	Generates quantitative data, easy to analyze, evaluate	Averaging of opinions
Inexpensive		Allows evaluating various CAS options	May not test future
Allows evaluating various CAS options	Consumers have negative preconceptions towards advertising based on the desire to resist manipulation used in advertising	Wider sample, more objective	Difficult to administer and time-consuming.
Provides easy opportunity for consumer to express his reactions	Distortion of opinions. If one group member made negative comments about CAS, it is doubtful that the group will resist the first opinion and will start advocating CAS		Expensive
	The problem of generalizability of the research results: samples are small in relation to the population size and objectivity of research results is limited.		Questions do not reflect subjective opinions of respondents, intermediate opinions are not evaluated

to allow seeing all possible options and predict the possible results. This method allows to review the totality of decision options, to collect information about each of them, and to analyze the results of such decision (Blech, Blech, 2004; Bogart, 1884)

Another option is represented by application of *quantitative mathematical methods in the decision-making process*. Application of the latter method is limited, as it is time-consuming and requires a lot of financial resources, a special data processing system, and expert assistance. On the other hand, qualitative rather than quantitative evaluation criteria dominate in CAS decision-making; hence, it is difficult to make a precise definition of their values and to analyze their consequences. The practical application of this method is complicated (Puškorius, 2001)

Both of the latter CAS decision-making methods differ from the first method in terms of the role played by the decision-maker: in the first case CAS options are evaluated by the target segment representatives, while the decision-maker acts only as an arbiter who categorizes opinions and determines the final solutions. In the second case, it is the decision-maker him/herself who analyzes and evaluates alternative CAS.

3.2. Alternative CAS decision-making methods

These methods are designed to control the thinking processes taking place during the decision-making process. They are flexible and reflect tendencies of the today's market: dynamism and increasing uncertainty. We will discuss two methods which are used most widely.

J.M. Dru's method of "Disruption" (Dru, 2001) is designed specifically for advertising industry, however, it may also be applied in other fields of activity. According to the author, the method has been created on the basis of many years of experience of working in advertising agency and on market tendencies. The method consists of three stages:

- **Stereotype:** identification of general stereotypical attitudes characteristic of competition strategies and target users;
- **disruption:** questioning of stereotypical attitudes, rejection of all pre-conceptions, search for alternatives;
- **vision:** formulation of a completely new idea and its evaluation in the long-term perspective.

This method can be explained using a sample situation: "Clairol Herbal Essences Shampoo".

- **Stereotype:** the advertising of the shampoo should emphasize the ultimate benefit for consumer – well-looking hair.
- **Disruption:** show the ultimate benefit – that the benefit is the hair washing process itself.
- **Vision:** Hair washing makes hair look fresh and new, it makes women feel beautiful and sexy.

This method is oriented towards the search, generation and selection of non-traditional solutions on the basis of past research. This is a system of coordinates, which is mobile and easily managed.

E. Goldrat's method of "Thought Processes Management" (Goldrat, 2002) is not advertising-oriented, but it is the flexibility and universality that make it applicable to the CAS decision-making process. The principle of this method is similar to the decision-tree principle – the method is based on identification of CAS options and their consequences. The essence of the method is structuring of thought processes

stimulating the use of intuition in the required direction. It involves creation of logic schemes allowing identification of success factors, cause-effect relationship, the present and the desirable future conditions.

Flexibility and tendency towards selection of novel CAS makes the alternative methods attractive. However, these methods have one disadvantage – they are subjective.

On the other hand, the traditional (based on the system of criteria) decision-making methods have some limitations, the main of them being two: a) they are oriented to the selection of the standard CAS (it is complicated to evaluate original and innovative CAS), (b) the process of decision-making is complicated, time and financial investments are required.

We suggest a way to eliminate this disadvantage – to make decisions exclusively on the basis of arguments rather than emotions. We believe that CAS decision-making may be conducted integrating both methods: the consumer research-based method would provide an objective basis for the CAS decision, while the alternative methods would provide for a flexible and creative interpretation of such objective data. It is likely that the CAS option selected in such a way would be not only result-oriented, but distinctive and original as well.

When modeling CAS decision-making as a managerial group decision, we require the model to facilitate not only any consensus but also the most effective one, when all members of the group strive for perfection in an uninhibited, doubtless, free and conscious manner and make the most effective decision using mutual criticism (Seilius, 2001). It may be concluded that the decision-making team of advertiser and advertising agency may operate in an effective manner when both participants have an identical understanding of the purpose, apply the same means for achieving

the purpose and follow the same procedures and rules. Therefore, apart from other recommendations, it is obvious that the advertising agency and the advertiser have to use the same methods and criteria for CAS decision-making, all of which shall be consumer-oriented.

Conclusions

1. Making decisions about CAS is an administrative managerial decision characterized by uncertainty and risk related to peculiarities of the object. In terms of the number of participants in the decision-making process, it is a managerial group decision characterized by the participation of representatives of two independent economic subjects – the advertising agency and the advertiser. Therefore, apart from the general issues of group decision-making, such decisions are also characterized by issues of the compatibility of interests of the subjects.

2. Another peculiarity of the CAS decision-making process is that both participants in this process are represented not by a single person, but by a group of persons, which makes it an atypical decision of “a group in a group” type. CAS decision-making process involves three main stages: a need for CAS, development of CAS options, and making of a decision concerning the best CAS. The article focuses on the last stage in the decision-making process, in which decisions concerning methods and criteria of selection are made and such methods and criteria are used to select the best CAS option. During this stage, the decisions concerning methods and criteria for selection of CAS are made and on their basis the best CAS option is selected. During this stage, both participants in the decision-making process – the advertising agency and the advertiser – have to decide which decision-making methods should be used. The CAS decision-making methods to

be used must integrate the perspectives and interests of both the advertising agency and the advertiser, they should be coherent and consumer-oriented.

3. An empirical research done in Lithuania showed that the prevailing CAS selection method in the Lithuanian advertising market is subjective, based on the decision maker’s intuition and experience. Only 15.4 per cent of advertising agencies and 11.5 per cent of advertisers make decisions on the basis of rational scientific methods.

The subjective decision has at least two main disadvantages: (a) high risk of a wrong decision, as the decision is based on the subjective taste and opinion, which are totally dependent on the competence and intuition of the person and provide no basis for economic evaluation; (b) it is complicated to adjust the opinions of the advertising agency and of the clients and to manage them effectively.

4. Two main reasons why decision-making methods are rarely used in practice of CAS selection: (a) lack of the knowledge about the methods, (b) the limitations of the methods which advertising professionals experienced in their work in practice, i.e. the usage of the decision-making methods requires additional time and financial resources, as well as the fact that it is difficult to evaluate innovative and original CAS. Therefore, the results of the empirical research confirmed the hypothesis raised at the beginning of the article and complemented it. It is thought that the wider usage of the existing decision making methods while selecting CAS would improve decision quality and make the cooperation between the advertising agency and the advertiser more effective.

6. CAS decision-making may be conducted using both the traditional methods based on a system of evaluation criteria and the alternative methods. The author recommends an integra-

tion of the two methods of decision-making: the method based on the system of criteria would provide an objective basis for the CAS decision, while the alternative methods would provide for a flexible and creative interpretation of such objective data. It is likely that the CAS option selected in such a way would be not only result-oriented, but distinctive and original as well.

7. Abundance of the CAS decision-making criteria and problems related to evaluation of their relative importance and mutual compatibility point to the need for a new system of criteria for CAS decision-making. The following requirements of such system may be distinguished: the system should include all main groups of criteria for the evaluation of CAS (the author has identified 4 different groups), a limited number of criteria, and a new method for coordination of criteria based on compatibility rather than on prioritizing.

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The empirical study highlighted another problem – the difference between sets of criteria used by the advertising agency and by the advertiser: evaluation criteria used by the advertising agency is advertiser- rather than consumer-oriented. Therefore, the process of CAS generation, evaluation, and implementation is not consistently focused on the consumer but rather has two focuses – the advertiser (from the perspective of the advertising agency) and the consumer. Stemming from the advertising agency's desire to sell the CAS effectively, such orientation promotes agreement with opinions of the advertiser and conformity to his subjective characteristics, stereotypes, and attitudes. In this way the focus is moved away from the center of advertising – the opinion of the consumer. This problem could be solved by implementing a common system of evaluation criteria.

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KŪRYBINĖS REKLAMOS STRATEGIJOS PASIRINKIMO METODAI IR JŲ TAIKYMAS

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S a n t r a u k a

Tinkama kūrybinė reklamos strategija (trumpinama – KRS) suteikia galimybę padidinti reklamos efektyvumą santykinai mažomis finansinėmis investicijomis. Todėl ji aktuali dviem pagrindiniams reklamos rinkos dalyviams – reklamos agentūrai (trumpinama – RA) ir reklamos davėjui (trumpinama – RD).

Apsisprendimas, kokią KRS pasirinkti ir įgyvendinti, yra sudėtingas ir atsakingas procesas, reikalaujantis pasverti naudos ir rizikos, konkurencingumo ir kitus veiksnius, taip pat derinti reklamos agentūros ir reklamos davėjo norus, interesus, galimybes. Jį sunkina ir sprendimo objektas – KRS, kuris yra kompleksinis ir nepakankamai iširtas.

Straipsnio tyrimo objektas – KRS alternatyvų vertinimo metodai, teoriniai ir praktiniai aspektai.

Nagrinėjama mokslinė-praktinė problema – kaip susisteminti sprendimo priėmimo metodus, įvertinti

jų tinkamumą KRS pasirinkimui, taip pat išspręsti vertinimo ir pasirinkimo kriterijų pobūdžio, skaičiaus ir suderinamumo problemą. Problemiška tai, kad praktikoje KRS dažnai pasirenkama intuityviai, t. y. remiantis asmenine sprendimo priėmimo patirtimi ir nuomone, moksliniai valdymo sprendimų metodai dažniausiai netaikomi. Kai kuriais atvejais toks sprendimo priėmimo būdas gali pasiteisinti, tačiau dažniau subjektyvūs veiksniai užgožia ekonominį sprendimo pagrįstumą ir racionalius aspektus. Žvelgiant iš mokslinės pozicijos, KRS gali būti pasirenkama taikant daug skirtingų metodų (bendrų ir specifinių), tačiau nėra tyrimų ir jų praktinio taikymo rekomendacijų. Pasirinkimo problemą komplikuoja ir vertinimo kriterijų gausa, dažnai sudėtinga juos visus aprėpti, išvengti jų prieštaravimo, įvertinti reikšmingumą ir prioritetus. Be to, skiriasi RA ir RD naudojami KRS vertinimo kriterijai.

Didėjantis KRS reikšmingumas, neteisingo sprendimo padarinių rizika skatina plačiau analizuoti šią problemą tiek teoriniu, tiek praktiniu požiūriu ir pagrindžia šio straipsnio temos aktualumą bei sava-laikiškumą.

Straipsnio tikslas – ištirti KRS pasirinkimo metodus ir įvertinti jų taikymo galimybes.

Siekiant įgyvendinti minėtą tikslą straipsnyje analizuojama specializuota literatūra, tirianti KRS klausimus, taip pat sprendimo priėmimo teorija, vertinamas jos pritaikymas KRS pasirinkimui. Remiantis teorinės literatūros apžvalga, straipsnyje nustatomi esamų metodų pranašumai bei trūkumai ir ieškoma galimybių šį sprendimą gerinti. Nagrinėjami reklamos kūrybinės strategijos teoriniai klausimai menkai tirti mokslinėje literatūroje, o Lietuvoje iš viso apleista tiek teorinė, tiek praktinė sritis. Toks nepakankamas dėmesys gali būti aiškinamas įprastos ir kūrybinės veiklos sąsajų sudėtingumu, kūrybos įtakos išskirtinumui bei konkurencingumui vertinimo problemškumu ir, galiausiai – siaura teoretikų specializacija bei standartiniu mąstymu.

Remiantis teorinės literatūros analize, taip pat atlikto empirinio tyrimo rezultatais, nustatyta, kad KRS pasirinkimas – tai administracinis valdymo sprendimas, pasižymintis neapibrėžtumu ir rizikingumu, susijusiu su objekto specifika. Pagal sprendimo dalyviu skaičių – tai grupinis valdymo sprendimas, išskirtinis tuo, kad jame dalyvauja dviejų nepriklausomų

ūkio subjektų – reklamos agentūros ir reklamos davėjo – atstovai. Taigi, be bendrosios grupinio sprendimo problematikos, šiam sprendimui būdingos subjektų interesų suderinimo problemos. KRS pasirinkimas – trečiasis sprendimo priėmimo etapas, kurio metu apsi-sprendžiama dėl sprendimo priėmimo metodo bei kriterijų ir jais remiantis pasirenkama geriausia KRS alternatyva. Šiame etape abu sprendimo priėmimo dalyviai – reklamos agentūra ir reklamos davėjas turi susitarti, kokius sprendimo priėmimo metodus taikyti. KRS pasirinkimas gali būti daromas diegiant tiek tradicinius, vertinimo kriterijų sistema pagrįstus, tiek alternatyvius metodus. Autorė rekomenduoja šį pasirinkimą daryti integruojant abi metodikas: kriterijų sistema pagrįsta metodika suteiktų KRS pasirinkimui objektyvų pagrindą, o alternatyvieji metodai leistų šiuos objektyvius duomenis interpretuoti lanksčiai ir kūrybiškai. Taip pasirinkta KRS alternatyva būtų ne tik orientuota į rezultatą, bet ir originali bei išskirtinė. KRS pasirinkimo kriterijų gausa, jų svarbos įvertinimo ir tarpusavio suderinamumo problemos sudaro prielaidas galvoti apie naują KRS pasirinkimo kriterijų sistemą. Galime išskirti šiuos reikalavimus sistemai: vieninga RA ir RD, apimanti visas pagrindines KRS vertinimo kriterijų grupes (straipsnyje išskirtos keturios prasminiu požiūriu skirtingos grupės), ribotas kriterijų skaičius ir naujas kriterijų derinimo metodas, ne prioritetu, o suderinamumo prasme.