RETAIL SUPPORT USING MODERN MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Aleš Hes[1], Daniela Šálková[1], Martin Valůch[1]

Doc. Ing. Aleš Hes, CSc., Doc. Ing. Daniela Šálková, Ph.D., Ing. Martin Valúch
hes@pef.czu.cz, salkova@pef.czu.cz, valuch@pef.czu.cz
[1] Česká zemědělská univerzita v Praze, Provozně ekonomická fakulta, Katedra obchodu a financí, Kamýcká 129, 165 00 Praha Suchdol, Česká republika

Abstract: Currently, sales support within marketing communication is taking shape in comprehensive forms, which are becoming an influential determinant of customer behaviour and the retail environment. The changes brought about by digitization in the field of communication put the consumer in a different position as a decision-maker. It is he who receives the information, and it is entirely up to him to choose and use the form of communication channel. It is proven that consumers make decisions at the last minute, especially thanks to modern sales support tools. This change in the position of the consumer leads the retail industry to search for new ways of selling concepts that will become an influential factor of competitiveness in the domestic and global markets. The article points to this new challenge for retail in the area of greater use of creative thinking, where digitization and creativity in communication play a key role.

INTRODUCTION

Shopping in retail stores is a regular part of everyone's life. As consumers, they do not think particularly about products of ordinary consumption, they basically buy them every day and quite routinely. It is different for products or services that are not necessary. Consumers consider purchasing them much more. The development of the Internet expanded shopping possibilities and offered online stores as an alternative to brick-and-mortar stores. Customers find an abundance of products on them, which they can then buy from the comfort of their homes. This method of purchase is currently very popular, not only due to the availability of the Internet, but also due to the increasing confidence of customers in this type of store. Mutual communication between the supply side (production, trade) and consumers is completely moving to the digital internet media environment. Within the tools of the communication mix, the changes that have occurred recently in their use cannot be overlooked either. It aims at creating a good reputation. In order for information to have a higher weight in communication with consumers, it is necessary for the creators of marketing information to implement knowledge in it, which becomes the basis of communication success in their current perception by consumers. Thanks to new media, a young marketing branch - digital marketing communication - is currently being promoted very progressively. It is part of marketing communication and uses digital technologies for communication, which are equipped with new media. The principle of communication is the exchange of opinions and attitudes, i.e., a dialogue between the sending entity and the receiving entity. The essence of this communication is to increase the influence on the customer and increase his attention by expecting feedback from him. In particular, sales support tools containing movement, changes, actions, sounds, etc., which can provoke sensory reactions from customers, are used for this. From a long-term perspective, advertising is important, as it is one of the most used methods of marketing communication, and advertisers are spending more and more money on it (Janouch, 2020). The aim of the paper is to characterize

very successful and effective sales support tools in the current modern retail environment. For the purposes of the investigation, the research question was set: What sales promotion tools can positively affect brick-and-mortar retail business in the current competitive environment?

1. TRENDS IN MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN RETAIL

In marketing communication, there are clear shifts in retail from personal verbal communication to non-verbal communication in the Internet environment. The Internet and, with it, multinational corporations have significantly stood at the source of global communication since its inception. The beginning of the century is considered to be the harbinger of a revolutionary development from the point of view of communication. E.g., according to the statistics of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in 2000 the world had only 500 million mobile phone users and 250 million Internet users, but over the past 20 years the number of Internet and mobile users in the world has increased about 18x, i.e., to about 4, 5 billion internet users and approx. 5.8 billion mobile phone users. In 2021, approximately 4.9 billion people were on the Internet, which means almost more than half of the entire population on Earth (ITU, 2022).

Fig. 1 Individuals using the Internet
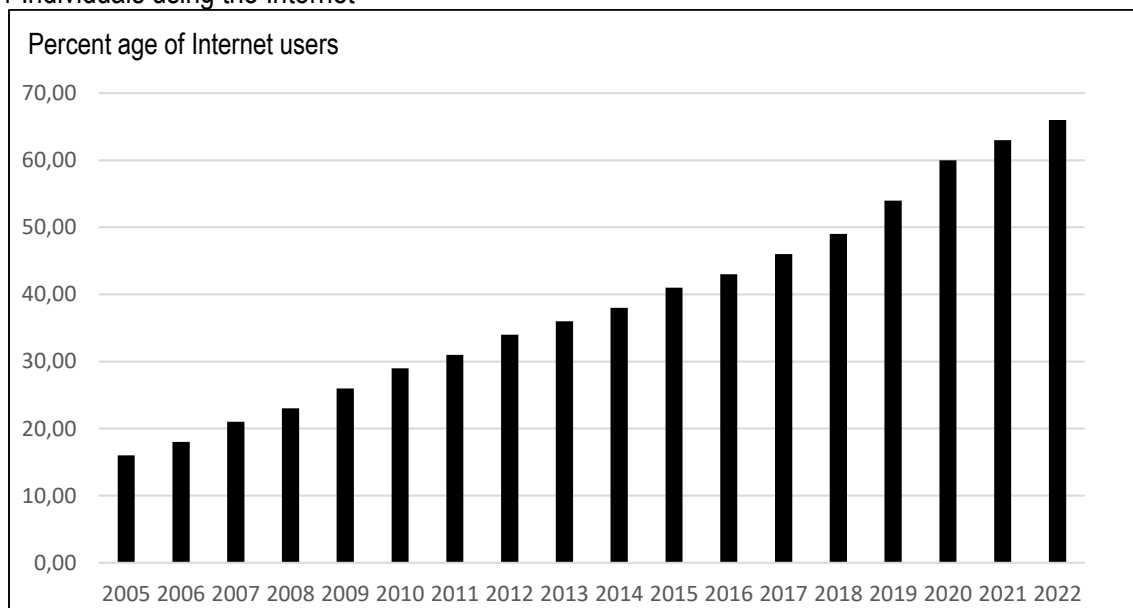
Source: ITU, 2022

In comparison, the number of users of "fixed" Internet in the Czech Republic is approaching its ceiling - after subtracting toddlers and very old people, practically everyone uses it. Furthermore, growth can be expected rather in the intensification of Internet use and also an increase in the rate of mobile Internet use, where there is more room for growth. All this means a great challenge for retail business to create a parallel path of trade to consumers through the Internet.

Benefits of this digital approach to consumers in retail include:
- Targeting and individualization – through two-way communication, they can understand the individual needs and preferences of customers. Today, no sales marketing strategy is complete without targeting.
- Monitoring and measurement – the advantage of the dialogue system is the measurability of many indicators that take place in real time. The basic measurable indicators include, for example, the number of visitors to the website, actual clicks on advertising and purchases, but also the acquisition of opinions and insights from social networks.
- Customer feedback – in contrast to the analogy system of one-sided mass media action, digital marketing is a two-way communication between the merchant and the customer, where the customer can request more detailed information about the product and, in case of dissatisfaction, communicate this to the merchant and the surrounding area, which is very dangerous for companies. Therefore, there was a greater emphasis on quality and service on the part of traders and manufacturers.
- Complexity – the Internet environment offers a wide range of applicable methods and tools that can be used to reach customers.
- Efficiency – in the area of sales support, digital marketing offers a cheaper possibility of promotion or sales support compared to other types of advertising.
- Availability – the internet works 24 hours a day throughout the year, including at night and on holidays.
- Global impact – it is possible through these technologies to reach anyone with access to the Internet, anywhere in the world (Evans & McKee, 2010).

Disadvantages of digital communication include:
- Credibility - the large number of scams on the Internet is not a good rating when using this medium. Most often, these are fictitious sales of products or services or an increase in crime on social networks.
- Less usability for local firms – global impact can cause competitive disadvantages for small local firms (Evans & McKee, 2010).

Due to the fact that digital forms of communication are increasingly being applied in retail, retail reacts to this trend very flexibly. In addition to brick-and-mortar stores, forms of e-shops have begun to gain traction, and they are becoming more and more popular with consumers. Internet marketing has undergone significant technological development in recent times. There are more and more products and services on the retail market, which is why it is important that all marketing tools of the company are set according to current modern technologies. Failure to comply with these measures can result in a very rapid exclusion from the competitive environment. It is important to have a lot of information and knowledge for making the right and successful decisions and setting up marketing campaigns. Brand building, which in the current global environment represents a strong competitive weight, also directly belongs to this. New trading companies are constantly entering the market with the aim of gaining or keeping regular customers. Their success is built on the moderating role of perceived product quality and price fairness on customer purchase intentions. For customers, the possibility of repurchasing and appropriate exposure of the product through sales promotion tools are important (Gorji & Siami, 2020). For retail, it is therefore necessary to create a professionally set business model, which is largely based on well-managed marketing in the area of supporting and building your corporate brand, with the help of which products or services can be properly promoted among the selected target group. The key activity is therefore to build a brand based on the best possible knowledge of your customers. In order to acquire these customers, businesses must find them, understand their needs and wishes and communicate with them (Světlík, 2018). Today's modern retailers tend to differentiate themselves by making their services easier for consumers. They found that shopping experience, store image and value for money are three important variables, of which shopping experience has emerged as the dominant factor

that influences consumer shopping behaviour in retail (Hasan & Subhash, 2014). Another tool that plays a key role in the purchase decision of customers in a retail store is the general atmosphere of the store. Space management is an influential unit in the store atmosphere, where the interconnectedness of store visualization, merchandising, price and promotions is used (Thirumalazhagan & Nithya, 2021). Furthermore, trade promotions produce better results when the direct channel structure is combined with the general strategy of the retailer (Claro et al., 2021).

1.1 Brand building in retail

Brand building in retail has become a phenomenon of today. As part of sales support, when in the past it was communication support for product brands, today retail groups create their own position on the market through the support of their corporate brand, e.g. Tesco, Albert, Billa, Lidl, Penny, Globus, etc. It is possible to trace a certain dependence between the corporate brand and its success in the retail market through the offer of quality product brands. In other words, the more a retailer offers quality product brands, the more it is valued by consumers and its corporate brand gains a higher competitive position and prestige. Retail companies realized this dependence very early, and therefore almost all of them introduced their private brands, which become the content of their advertising campaigns. However, they are built differently, mostly based on price concessions from producers, and retail significantly presents them in marketing support as an attractive and interesting offer for consumers. For most of these private label products, the consumer doesn't even know the actual manufacturer. However, in today's postmodern society, branding becomes a process based not on the fact that companies choose their customers, but on the fact that customers choose their brands, which are an individual statement of their attitudes and behaviour.

Du Plessis (2011) already divided brands according to their perception by customers into four categories:
1. Masterbrands (combination of authority, innovation, acceptance and identification with them, Nike, Sony, Coca-cola).
2. Prestige brands (their attractiveness is based on cultural origin or founder, they mostly represent high value for the customer, BMW, Chanel, Rolex).
3. Superbrands (international brands that influence category membership, Gillette, American Express).
4. Glocalbrands (brands that are sold on a global scale but are marketed locally, Dove, Nestlé).
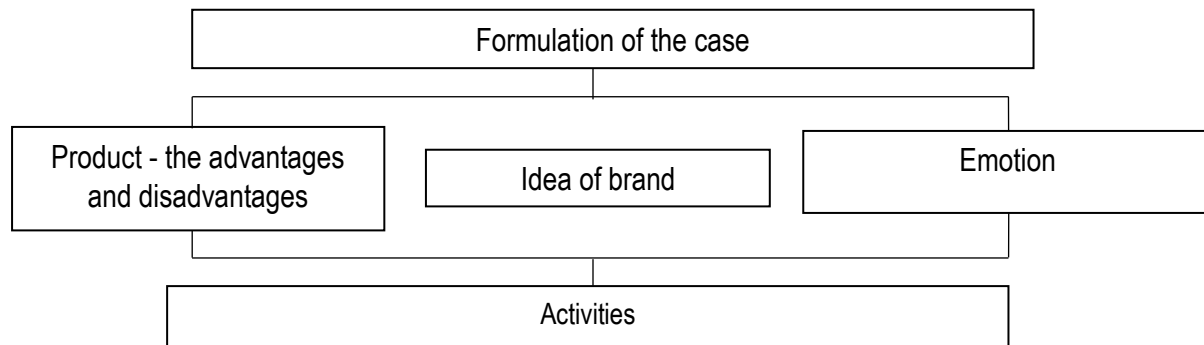
The prerequisites for successfully building a corporate brand, especially in a retail company, from the point of view of its effective support, are:
1. Functional internal communication in the company.
2. Vision, strategic plan and brand positioning.
3. Brand architecture and activation.
4. Model of creating a global brand.

Add. 1 Most retail companies that want to succeed with their global brand in the market do not realize that barrier-free internal communication supports and builds the brand in the external environment of the company as well. Satisfaction in the company environment, professional competence, interest in economic results are aspects that build employee loyalty and represent key supports in building your company or product brand.

Add. 2 The vision of the brand should express the meaning and purpose of the brand, inspiration, exceeding the boundaries of its mere functionality and profit generation. For the formulation of the vision, it is important to evaluate and determine the ambition of the brand, which is part of the strategic plan of the brand. The latter is focused on the benefits of the product and the creation of emotions in customers. It is primarily about simplicity, personalization, and immediacy, where emotions are the source for creating a brand personality.

Fig. 2 Construction of brand positioning

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │         Formulation of the case          │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                        │
  ┌──────────────────────┐  ┌────────────────────┐  ┌─────────────────────┐
  │ Product - the        │  │   Idea of brand    │  │      Emotion        │
  │ advantages           │  │                    │  │                     │
  │ and disadvantages    │  │                    │  │                     │
  └──────────────────────┘  └────────────────────┘  └─────────────────────┘
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │                Activities                │
                    └─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Source: Own processing (Taylor, 2007)

Brand expansion /expanding into other sales areas of interest/ is recommended to be done in two ways: functional and emotional. Functional extension is focused on the functional extension of the brand, e.g., by adding a smaller ingredient to the product content. In this case, the brand personality does not need to change, it is still original, and the innovative functional advantage can have an incredibly positive effect on supporting customer positioning. Emotional brand extension is appropriate to use in the case where the brand extension creates higher differences from the personality, style, and originality of the brand. This "sub-brand" takes on its own personality and style and can create a new entity through collaboration with the original brand.

Add. 3 The following principles are essential for brand architecture:
- must last long-term,
- gives direction,
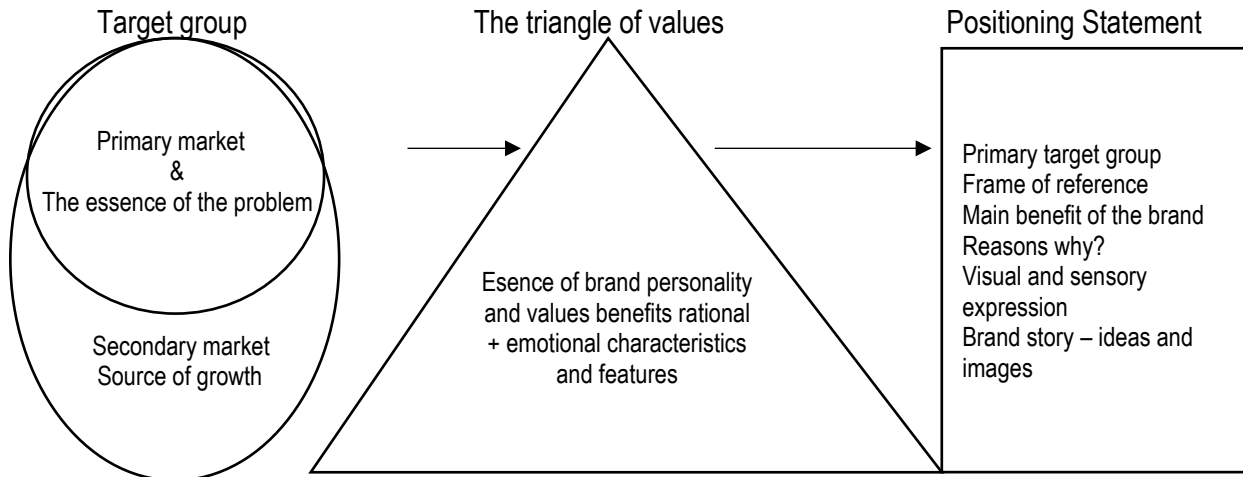- long-term image and strategy,
- global consistency.

The brand architecture is therefore completely linked to the creative brief, which must be precise and concise, as it changes very rarely.

Add. 4 When creating a global brand, you can rely on a proven model that guarantees full functionality and reality. In retail, this is an important aspect of supporting your brand and is a paradigm of success. In order for the model to work, it is necessary to check it from the point of view of important factors:
1. Determination of the key target segment.
2. Checking the perception of the brand, thereby building the brand idea.
3. Benefits for the customer.
4. Ensuring credibility.
5. Verification of brand personality, style and form.
6. Choice of appropriate media channels – a combination of conventional and digital.
7. Timing, schedule.
The model is then created in three areas: the target group, the triangle of values and the positioning-statement.

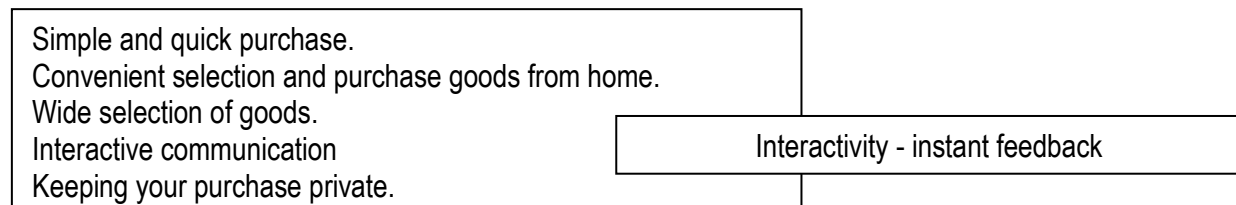Fig. 3 Brand building model - architecture and brand activation

Target group | The triangle of values | Positioning Statement

Primary market
&
The essence of the problem

Secondary market
Source of growth

Esence of brand personality and values benefits rational + emotional characteristics and features

Primary target group
Frame of reference
Main benefit of the brand
Reasons why?
Visual and sensory expression
Brand story – ideas and images

Source: Own processing

For retail, especially in brick-and-mortar sales, building your corporate brand is key. However, it cannot be forgotten that in retail there are other parallel factors that influence the corporate brand. This includes particularly sensitive work with marketing mix tools with a focus on promotions, which currently significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Sales promotion represents a short-term stimulus in marketing communication in retail and must be combined with other tools of the communication mix. Its emphasis is primarily focused on the benefits or representation of the higher utility of the product or service for the consumer who visits the retail store. Without sales promotion, this uniqueness of the product or service could be overlooked by the consumer. Sales promotion is most often combined with advertising and personal selling. When evaluating the effectiveness of a sales promotion tool, it is important to focus on four key aspects of sales promotion:

- the ability to attract attention,
- the ability to convey an essential message,
- the ability to convince
- initiate purchase decisions.

Communication messages in the framework of sales support can be created according to the well-known AIDA model. However, for the effect and effectiveness of sales promotion, it is important to create unquestionable and transparent benefits for consumers.

Fig. 4 Creating benefits for consumer

Simple and quick purchase.
Convenient selection and purchase goods from home.
Wide selection of goods.
Interactive communication
Keeping your purchase private.

Interactivity - instant feedback

Source: Own processing

For today's demanding customer, feedback in communication is very important. It becomes a tool of competitive advantage and is one of the constructive elements of building or strengthening the company's corporate brand.

1.2 Merchandising – a functional communication tool for sales support in retail

Merchandising represents an important functional communication tool for sales support in brick-and-mortar retail stores. It is a set of activities to ensure that the right goods are in the right place, at the right time and at the right price. The parallel goal of merchandising is to ensure optimal exposure of the assortment in the retail space, which will lead to its higher sales. Merchandising activities include, for example:

• replenishment of goods
• elimination of the so-called "out of stock"
• marking the goods with a valid price tag
• marking the goods with an element of protection against theft
• compliance with the so-called planogram /POG/ scheme of a sample shelf of products (goods, POS, POP materials)
• FACE (number of visible front sides of the product packaging)
• display of the entire portfolio of goods according to the valid listing
• display/withdrawal and labelling of promotional goods, including promotional sales positions, such as the so-called golden cross, fronts of shelves and aisles, checkout area, etc.
• (un)installation of POP and POS materials
• exclusion from sale of damaged or expired goods
• reporting of undesirable conditions and compliance with service parameters
• care of the goods even in the place of their storage
• remodelling according to new plan-o-grams
• merchandising when opening a store
• inventories of goods
• ensuring the return of promotional goods that are not standardly included in the mandatory listing.

Merchandising is carried out by marketing teams with store staff or specialized sales promotion agencies. Merchandiser is the responsible person who manages merchandising activities. He mainly takes care of the overall visualization of the store, arranging shop windows, displaying goods and monitors the continuous rotation of goods. He can choose between vertical or horizontal presentation of the goods depending on the company's marketing strategy and policy, he also takes care of the visual presentation of the goods and ensures face out merchandising. The Merchandiser is also in charge of price monitoring, advertising campaigns and checking the expiration of goods. As part of strengthening sales support, merchandising works with POP and POS materials, which include displays, stands, shelf markings, counters, stands with product tastings or display of trinkets at checkouts.

1.3 POP-UP shops, a modern trend in retail sales

POP-UP shops represent a modern new form of retail presentation and sale of branded products without large costs. These are short-term leases of premises where products are presented in combination with an accompanying offer of benefits and advantages for the customer. They are very similar to showrooms, but with a time limit. This form of retail sales is suitable for the presentation and sale of seasonal goods, for the presentation of e-shops with the aim of releasing stocks, or they are also suitable for beginning retailers to test their success in the competitive retail market. Appropriately assembled containers can serve as spaces for POP-UP shops. This trend of brand support and its marketability has been operating for many years in the USA and the UK, where it is already considered a proven tradition of a form of retail sales and brand support (Admin, 2019). The advantages include clearly lower financial demands than in a classic retail store, effective

sales support, the customer can get to know the product personally and try it out. Among the disadvantages of this retail sales format is the short term of the lease and the high rent in lucrative locations. Disadvantages, however, can be solved very well by agreements with site owners.

2. DIGITALIZATION OF COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE SUPPORT OF RETAIL SALES

With the advent of new media, digital marketing communication is starting to be promoted very progressively. It is part of marketing strategies and uses modern digital technologies for communication, which are equipped with new media. The successful result of this communication is an operative and quick exchange of opinions and attitudes between the retailer and the customer. The essence of this communication is to actively involve the customer in the sales process. Recently, the customer can configure a precise purchase based on his own needs through modern media and applications. From a retail point of view, this form of communication is one of the fastest growing communication platforms. For this communication, retail must be equipped with high-quality technology, cloud storage with sufficient capacity and trained staff. Retail communicates in two ways: synchronous communication and asynchronous communication. Synchronous communication represents communication in real time /telephone conversations, chat, social networks, WhatsApp, asynchronous communication represents communication with a certain time delay /e-mail, questionnaires, forms, shared documents, etc./. If retail uses everything, it may happen that so much information from customers cannot be handled in capacity. It is therefore essential that digital communication from the retail side does not annoy customers but works with them on a certain communication platform. Nevertheless, this form of communication becomes a necessary part of communication with businesspeople, especially if there is an unpredictable crisis, e.g., pandemic, political. At the time of the COVID 19 pandemic, online communication has become the only possible way of communication to ensure basic needs. And online shopping is constantly growing, by about 200% since 2016 (Český statistický úřad, 2020).

Tab. 1 On-line shopping in the Czech Republic, 2020

	They bought in the last 3 months			They bought in the last 12 months			They bought at least once in life		
	in thousand	%	%	in thousand	%	%	in thousand	%	%
Total 16+	**4 728,0**	**53,8**	**65,0**	**5 770,7**	**65,7**	**79,4**	**6 386,7**	**72,7**	**87,9**
Sex									
Men 16+	2 271,6	53,1	62,7	2 811,5	65,7	77,6	3 135,3	73,3	86,5
Women 16+	2 456,4	54,4	67,4	2 959,1	65,6	81,2	3 251,4	72,1	89,2
Age group									
16-24 years old	627,7	73,1	74,1	734,1	85,5	86,6	763,5	88,9	90,1
25–34 years old	1 105,6	82,0	83,6	1 230,0	91,2	93,0	1 284,2	95,2	97,1
35–44 years old	1 184,4	71,3	72,3	1 430,4	86,1	87,3	1 547,9	93,2	94,4
45–54 years old	942,3	61,3	64,2	1 193,5	77,7	81,3	1 336,6	87,0	91,0
55–64 years old	557,5	42,9	51,2	739,8	57,0	67,9	869,7	67,0	79,8
65–74 years old	269,4	21,1	36,7	387,4	30,4	52,8	495,3	38,9	67,5
75+	41,0	5,1	24,3	55,5	6,8	32,9	89,5	11,0	53,1
Education (25-64 years old)									
Basic	115,0	35,1	49,7	141,4	43,1	61,1	179,1	54,6	77,3
High school without high school diploma	1 034,0	50,8	55,7	1 384,4	68,0	74,6	1 595,3	78,3	86,0
High school with high school diploma	1 537,3	71,7	73,0	1 837,8	85,7	87,3	1 974,6	92,1	93,8
University	1 103,5	82,7	83,1	1 230,0	92,1	92,7	1 289,3	96,6	97,1

Economic activity (16+)								
Employment	3 384,5	67,8	69,9	4 104,4	82,2	84,7	4 482,3	89,8	92,5
The unemployed	88,8	50,4	.	105,8	60,1	73,1	116,5	66,2	80,5
Housewives	312,0	79,5	81,2	350,5	89,4	91,3	372,8	95,0	97,1
Students	516,0	74,3	74,3	603,2	86,9	86,9	628,9	90,6	90,6
Old age pensioners	354,0	15,3	33,7	510,0	22,1	48,5	678,1	29,3	64,5
Disabled pensioners	72,7	33,0	48,7	96,7	43,9	64,8	108,2	49,1	72,4

Source: Processed based on Český statistický úřad, 2020

As far as sales support is concerned, digital communication offered its significant possibilities here as well, which found a positive response from customers. This is mainly information about products, prices and marketing events. However, compared to the conventional way of approaching customers in sales support, it is necessary to know that sales support in the digital environment has the same mission and function as in the traditional marketing environment, however, the digital environment for sales support is limited in terms of capacity and material. The consumer cannot touch the product and try it on. But it is quite undeniable that it supports the building or recall of the brand and is a highly effective tool for consumer acquisitions. It is also clear that sales support in the digital environment aims at performance and the fulfilment of short-term goals. Most of the time, targeting consumers is linked to an appropriate form of advertising and affects them at a more advanced stage of the purchase decision process. Linkage of sales support with advertising is key. Among the most used and successful forms of advertising in the digital environment in retail are:

Powerful text advertising with immediate response / e.g., Google Adwords, Sklik and Facebook/ systems.

PPC advertising. PPC advertising, with its placement above full-text search (SEM), belongs to the most widespread advertising on the Internet in the search engines Seznam.cz and Google.com. Creating the right and high-quality PPC campaign depends on ensuring high relevance between keywords, ads and landing page content. This can be achieved by thoroughly analysing the websites to be promoted. Subsequently, it is necessary to find out the goal or intention of the campaign and set the financial budgets accordingly. Campaign management consists of optimizing keywords, increasing and decreasing MCP (maximum cost per click) and CPC (actual cost per click), tracking CTR (click through rate), designing new more effective ads, increasing conversion (sales), decreasing cost per click and increasing the position in the field of SEM, evaluating statistics and thorough monitoring of the entire area of PPC due to the constant development of these systems. An essential part is the addition of exclusionary and new keywords (Key Words) according to the user's search queries or according to the set goals. At the same time, you can use optimization based on the conversions made with the help of statistics from Google AdWords (Click) and Google Analytics.

Google AdWords covers non-stop searches both on Google.com and on partner websites (Atlas.cz, Centrum.cz, etc.). In Google AdWords, you can very effectively target advertising according to interest, language, device and geographic location.

Remarketing is a method of targeted internet advertising offered by the Google AdWords PPC campaign system. It is possible to reach one target group of people who have already come to the remarketing provider's website. The remarketing campaign is set up in the Google AdWords content network and is displayed with the help of graphically created banners to a certain group of people who have already viewed the website. Remarketing is a very effective and modern form of advertising that is suitable for brand revitalization.

Google Analytics
In Google Analytics it is possible to track:
1. From what sources the visitor entered the website.
2. What was the exact traffic from individual sources.

3. How long the user stayed on the website.
4. What percentage of brand-new users viewed the web page.
5. How many conversions were made in a certain period.
6. What were the exact steps of the users on the site and many more.
These analytical functions are helpful in the execution of subsequent steps, both within the framework of business and above all marketing strategies.

Sclik
Sclik works on a similar principle to Google AdWords. Here you can also choose from two possible advertising networks - a search network and a content network (e.g., Firmy.cz, Sauto.cz, Sfinance.cz, Sport.cz, Novinky.cz, ProZeny.cz), while the scope of the content network is much more limited, than in Google AdWords. Most advertisers currently target PPC advertising in Google AdWords, where they also have the option of linking the campaign with a remarketing and banner campaign.

Brand - contextual advertising
This is primarily a graphically processed advertisement, i.e. banner or video advertisement. Brand advertising is significantly more expensive than performance advertising. It focuses primarily on attracting the customer at first sight and gradually building the brand.

From the retail side, these options are therefore clear and fully used, especially in the online environment. This includes other tools in the form of podcasts, video conferences /Zoom, Google Meet and Google Hangouts, Skype, WebEx, Whereby/, group communication /Slack, Discord, Google Chat, Microsoft Teams, Google Groups/, information sharing /Google Doc, Google Sheets, Google Keep/, and communication applications /WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook Messenger/.It can be expected that the digital communication platform will continue to develop. When using the digital environment as part of marketing communication, however, so-called information overload can occur. It is a situation where customers have more information than they can absorb. Then they have to filter the information and it is very important what filters they choose. In sales promotion, this is either an opportunity or a threat. In the first case, merchants can use a suitable benefit that will cause customers to accept the offer and make a purchase decision. In the second case, it is a threat when a large and inappropriately constructed offer overwhelms customers due to "information overload" and they reject it and never return to it. Indeed, freedom of speech on the Internet allows real information to be mixed with the assumptions of other users or with outright intentional misinformation.

CONCLUSION
The digitization of the company and the digital communication associated with it represent a wide range of new opportunities for retail companies that want to build stronger positions in the competitive environment. It offers a range of tools that can be a very suitable alternative to common marketing communication tools, or on the contrary, they can be unique in their nature. The study proved that a brand that customers like and are loyal to is typical for modern society. This can answer the research question that was stated at the beginning of the article. Almost all marketing strategies are aimed at brand building and building or strengthening your brand is a key trend in marketing campaigns. New forms of sales through non-traditional platforms have also developed in retail. These include diverse types of sales points with massive marketing communication and, above all, merchandising, which cannot be overlooked as an important factor in sales success, especially in brick-and-mortar stores. Another tool of successful marketing communication with customers are its forms in the environment of modern new media. Digitization in communication has significantly developed into all tools

of the marketing and communication mix. Even sales support uses digital forms of communication and there is an assumption that its effectiveness will continue to rise.

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