

## DISCOVERING THE BENEFITS OF SOME BIO-ACTIVE COMPOUNDS FROM ORGANIC COSMETICS USING MARKETING & PR

IOANA ADINA OANCEA<sup>1,2</sup>, TIBERIUS STANCIU<sup>3</sup>, ADRIANA BARBU<sup>4</sup>,  
ANDREEA VLAD<sup>4</sup>

*Manuscript received: 10.12.2016; Accepted paper: 06.01.2017;*

*Published online: 30.03.2017.*

**Abstract.** *Organic cosmetics represent one of the best approaches in skin care since millions of people rediscover the power of nature by using them. In order to bring awareness on this products free of chemicals, less invasive and rich in bio-active compounds, capable of healing skin disorders such as acne and dermatitis, marketing is the key to pinpoint this information. Good marketing has become increasingly vital for success. The first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenged firms to prosper financially and even survive in the face of an unforgiving economic environment [1]. To gain consumers' attention, people need a better understanding of this product category. They need to understand the benefits of plant materials used in the manufacturing process, how the products are or can be naturally preserved, what effects produce on the skin, if they are dermatologically tested and approved by the Health Ministry etc. The aim of this paper was to develop unique marketing and PR tools for one roumanian manufacturer of organic cosmetics to icrease awareness of their unique cosmetic recipes, ingredients used, product and services benefits. During the year of 2016 the company used our tools and the results were impressive.*

**Keywords:** *cosmetics, bio-active compounds, marketing, public relations.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The cosmetic industry uses a large amount of plant material in various forms, in particular, essential oils, in the following product categories: emulsions, creams, lotions and face masks. These products are used to prevent or treat various dermatological disorders or imbalances in the epidermis. Essential oils are a good source of organic compounds with high therapeutic potential and this fact it is scientifically proven. These "formulations" have been used for thousands of years. Essential oils are considered the purest and the most concentrated part of the plant. Depending on the plant specie, essential oils have a chemical composition richer or poorer in bio-active compounds with antioxidant properties. The organic cosmetics manufacturer we collaborated with for this paper, conducted a study and concluded that essential oils extracted from the dry buds of *Populus nigra* (black poplar), *Pinus sylvestris* (pine) and *Abies alba* (fir), for example, have very high therapeutic effects in skin care, especially in treating acne, dermatitis and / or scars left behind acne pustules [2]. Unlike antibiotics or other synthetic drugs with anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and healing effect, antimicrobial substances of plant origin are not associated with side effects and have major potential in healing even infectious disorders (for example: acne caused by the pathogenic

<sup>1</sup> SC.Dan-Elis.SRL, Product Manufacturing, 907285 Topraisar, Romania. E-mail: [oancea.careless@gmail.com](mailto:oancea.careless@gmail.com).

<sup>2</sup> Politehnica University of Bucharest, 011061, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: [oancea.careless@gmail.com](mailto:oancea.careless@gmail.com).

<sup>3</sup> Dunarea de Jos University of Galati, 800008 Galati, Romania. E-mail: [stanciu.tiberius@yahoo.com](mailto:stanciu.tiberius@yahoo.com).

<sup>4</sup> Velvetique, Public Relations, Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: [comunicare@velvetique.eu](mailto:comunicare@velvetique.eu).

bacteria *Staphylococcus aureus* ). For a better understanding of how plant extracts manage to help the skin to heal from different skin disorder, look and feel better, the chemical composition of the plant extract should be studied.

Here are three examples of plant species that are used in cosmetics for their rich composition in bio-active compounds with antioxidant properties: **Poplar buds** (*Populus nigra*) essential oil contains betulen,  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$ -betulenol,  $\delta$ -humulen and  $\alpha$ -caryophyllene. These active principles act as an astringent, anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial easily, weak analgesic, antiseptic and antipyretic. The essential oil of **pine buds** (*Pinus sylvestris*) contains the following compounds:  $\alpha$ -pinene,  $\beta$ -pinene,  $\alpha$ -tujene, tricilenă, sabinene, borneol, thymol, limonene,  $\beta$ -felandren, E-caryophyllene, caryophyllene oxide,  $\alpha$ -terpineol,  $\alpha$ -terpinolen,  $\alpha$ -terpinene,  $\gamma$ -terpinene, terpinene-4-ol,  $\beta$ -burbonen acid, gallic acid, p-coumaric acid, homovanillic acid, vanilic acid,  $\alpha$ ,  $\gamma$ ,  $\delta$ -cadinene,  $\alpha$ -humulen, myrcene,  $\alpha$ ,  $\beta$ -cubeben, catechin, epicatechin, taxiresinol. These compounds have antioxidant activity, the ability to block the free radicals and anti-inflammatory, antiviral and antifungal effects. **Wild oregano** (*Origanum vulgare*) it is used in medicine and contains thymol, carvacrol, polyphenols (flavonoids, flavones), monoterpenes and monoterpenoids [3]. Recently, many researchers have advanced studies regarding the determination of phenolic compounds from ethanol extract of wild oregano, demonstrating the therapeutic effect [4]. These are just a few plant species that offer valuable extracts for the cosmetic industry but also for medicine. Their antioxidant activity was also proven in other scientific studies [5, 6].

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### 2.1. MATERIALS

For a quiqlier understanding and a faster reading, we are going to name the organic cosmetics manufacturer we collaborated with in this study: "Company X". To increase awareness of their unique cosmetic recipes, ingredients used, product and services benefits, we used some unique marketing and PR (public relations) tools and developed several series of activities conducted throughout 2016.

Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. One of the shortest good definitions of marketing is "meeting needs profitability". The American Marketing Association offers the following formal definition: Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners and society at large [7]. We can say with some confidence that the marketplace isn't what it used to be. It is dramatically different from what it was even 10 years ago. Today, major, and sometimes interlinking, societal forces have created new marketing behaviors, opportunities and challenges.

Here are 12 key ones: network information technology, globalization, deregulation (many countries have deregulated industries to create greater competition and growth opportunities), privatization, heightened competition (intense competition among domestic and foreign brands raises marketing costs and shrinks profit margins), industry convergence (industry boundaries are blurring as companies recognize new opportunities at the intersection of two or more industries), retail transformation, disintermediation (ex. Amazon.com), consumer buying power, consumer information, consumer participation, consumer resistance (many customers today feel there are fewer real product differences, so they show less brand loyalty and become more price-and quality-sensitive in their search for value) [8].

Marketing management is the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering and communicating superior customer value<sup>9</sup>. Managers sometimes think of marketing as "the art of selling products", but

many people are surprised when they hear that selling is *not* the most important part of marketing. Selling is the tip of the marketing iceberg. The marketing concept emerged in the mid-1950s as a customer-centered, sense-and-respond philosophy. The job is to find not the right customers for your products, but the right products for your customers.

## 2.2. METHODS

For the “X Company” was extremely important that people could realize the power of nature in healing the skin and the fact that we don't always need to treat our body with synthetic drugs. These messages must be presented to the consumers in a very organized manner so that they could understand easier the differences between organic cosmetics, chemicals-added cosmetics and synthetic drugs.

The marketing and PR tools that we used for creating a challenging 2016 Agenda for the “X Company” are briefly described in Table 1.

**Table 1. Key principles after which we guided the activities agenda for 2016.**

<b>Key principles</b>
○ <b>PHASE 1</b> - Starting promotion the organic cosmetic manufacturer; Events, Initiating the Project “Romanian Values”, Project partnerships – <i>Period March - May 2016</i>
○ <b>PHASE 2</b> - Continued communication activities, Creating an Album of the Project “Romanian Values”, Event GALA – <i>Period June - December</i>
○ Continuous communication with the Romanian Press
○ Establishing and maintaining partnerships

### **PHASE 1 – Activities in March-June 2016**

#### **March 2016**

##### *1. Event dedicated to women ambassadors in Romania- 20/30 persons*

- Training database
- Establishing partnerships for organizing the event
- Design event / concept
- Create text invitation in english and french
- Follow up by phone (confirmations)
- Set-up the event planner (speeches, key messages)
- Follow up after the event (thank you messages, event report, recommendations)

##### *2. “Romanian Values” Project – Creating a Brand Council*

- Research activity / identifying authentic Romanian cosmetics brands, entrepreneurs in the beauty domain / focus on women
- Preparing a list with various stakeholders / potential supporters / promoters of authentic Romanian values
- Successive meetings with various stakeholders / potential supporters / promoters of authentic Romanian values
- Meetings with specific journalists and finding 2-3 journalists that could join the project
- Presentation report- calendar setting workshop series to start the series of workshops sites

##### *3. Continuing Communication / identifying promotion opportunities*

- Starting centralize customer contacts (name, occupation, phone, date of birth)
- Communication with people in Brussels and Bucharest

- Permanent communication with the organic cosmetics manufacturer customers (workshops); Communication via email and monthly reporting
- Identifying potential partnerships

## April 2016

### 1. Event “Organic Cosmetics – the guarding angel for your health and beauty”

- Developing the event concept
- Preparing the guest list
- Creating text invitation; sending invitations on e-mail and mail
- Follow up by phone (event confirmations)
- Set-up the event planners (speeches, key messages)
- Follow up after the event (thank you messages, event report, recommendations)

### 2. „Romanian Values” Project – Brand Council continuing activities

- Continue meetings with various stakeholders / entrepreneurs
- Establishing partnerships with journalists
- Planning workshop series
- Workshop organization - 1-10 persons: design event / concept, create text invitation in romanian and english, follow up by phone (confirmations), set-up the event planner (speeches, key messages), Follow up after the event (thank you messages, event report, recommendations)

### 3. Continuing Communication / identifying promotion opportunities

- Starting centralize customer contacts (name, occupation, phone, date of birth)
- Communication with people in Brussels and Bucharest
- Permanent communication with the organic cosmetics manufacturer customers (workshops); Communication via email and monthly reporting
- Identifying potential partnerships

## May 2016

### 1. Event “How to live your feminine inside you while taking care of your child and running between deadlines”

- Training database
- Establishing partnerships for organizing the event
- Design event / concept
- Create text invitation in romanian and english
- Follow up by phone (confirmations)
- Set-up the event planner (speeches, key messages)
- Follow up after the event (thank you messages, event report, recommendations)

### 2. „Romanian Values” Project – Brand Council continuing activities

- Continue meetings with various stakeholders / entrepreneurs
- Establishing partnerships with journalists
- Planning workshop series
- Workshop organization - 1-10 persons: design event / concept, create text invitation in romanian and english, follow up by phone (confirmations), set-up the event planner (speeches, key messages), Follow up after the event (thank you messages, event report, recommendations)

### 3. Continuing Communication / identifying promotion opportunities

- Starting centralize customer contacts (name, occupation, phone, date of birth)
- Communication with people in Brussels and Bucharest
- Permanent communication with the organic cosmetics manufacturer customers (workshops); Communication via email and monthly reporting

- Identifying potential partnerships

## PHASE 2 – June – December 2016

- Continuing the promotion activities / continuing communication
- 1 monthly event
- 1 monthly workshop for the Brand Council
- Final event in December: The GALA - 100 persons: promoting the authentic romanian values in the cosmetics industry

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. RESULTS

The analysis of the “X Company” 2016 communication campaign results followed the company’s notoriety and sales increase. The analysis of sales increase was made in collaboration with the economic department of the “X Company”. We compared the results obtained in 2016 with those in 2015. The final results are presented in Fig. 1.

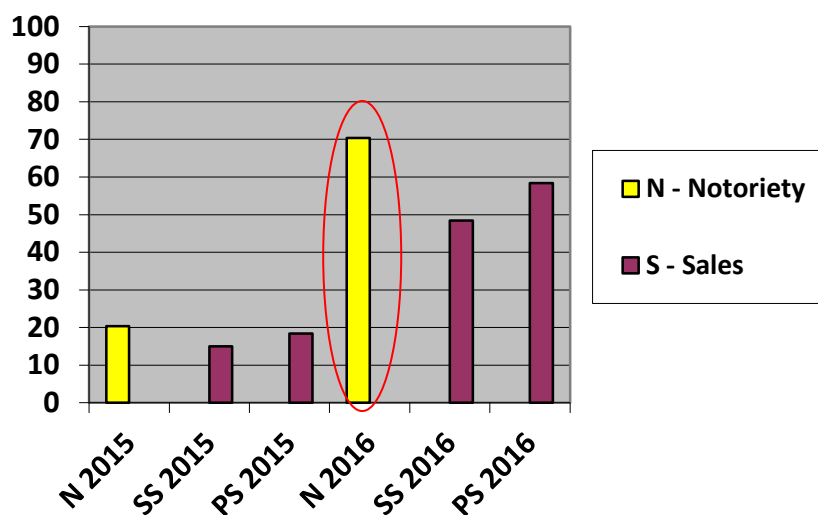


Figure 1. Notoriety and Sales increase in 2015 and 2016 of the “X Company”.  
SS – Services Sales, PS – Products Sales

The communication campaign started in March 2016 and managed over 30 appearances in central and local press until December 2016.

We targeted two complementary components of PR treated throughout the campaign: *Corporate PR* (by positioning the founder of the roumanian organic cosmetics company as a spokeswoman and the image of the cosmetic brand) and *Brand PR*: included several components: national and international event, press release, branding by involving celebrities concerned with beauty and healthy lifestyle, interviews with different magazines (Business Woman, Wall-Street.ro, Profit.ro, Romania Libera).

The presence of the Founder at other Gala Events of some major media brands (Gala Profit, Business Woman Gala, Gala Careers) facilitated building the brand and the networking area. Compared with 2015, the 2016 agenda increased notoriety with 50%. Regarding sales, both product and services sales increased with more than 30% in 2016.

### 3.2. DISCUSSION

The media received very well and in the most relevant way the messages of the roumanian cosmetics manufacturer: an entrepreneurial niche with high performance, with management demanding a prudent business that focuses on the purity of organic cosmetics, trendsetter in Romania in the pure and natural cosmetics sector (0 % synthesis substances), vast experience of the founder and its excellence in research (patents included), target - the international expanding in European markets. The media involved in the communication campaign included almost all types of media (radio, press agencies, mainstream publications, business publications, glossy media), except television, which will be addressed in a later stage of communication in 2017. As interviews and article appeared in media, the popularity of the manufacturer growth and it continues to attracted the interest of other media channels.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Romanian plant species are a good source for small cosmetic industries seeking to create pure and natural cosmetics. The usage of plant extract in cosmetics have a lot of advantages: fast penetration of the epidermis due to their rapid molecular recognition by skin metabolism, visible effectiveness and applied as directed, rejuvenate the skin, improve tissue firmness and regenerate skin cells.

Organic cosmetics represent an alternative in healing skin disorders like acne and dermatitis. Among all forms of plant extracts, essential oils have the highest concentration of polyphenol compounds and the highest antioxidant capacity.

Marketing is about identifying and meeting human and social needs. The unique marketing and PR tools developed for one roumanian manufacturer of organic cosmetics, increasing awareness of their unique cosmetic recipes, ingredients used, product and services benefits, during the year of 2016, led to impressive results in the company's portfolio, expanded the popularity of the brand and increased the sales.

The most relevant media appearances of the cosmetics manufacturer: article in Ziarul Financiar, print and online interview with Radio Romania News (July 2016 and resumed in November 2016), interview at Wall-Street.ro, print and online interview at Business Woman magazine, interview at Profit.ro, Forbes.ro, Capital.ro, Agerpres, dailybusiness.ro, Bursa.ro, thetrends.ro, romedic.ro, iaa.ro, article in "Romania Libera" (in press), article in "Forbes Life" (in press).

### REFERENCES

- [1] Keefe, L., *Marketing Defined*, Marketing News, pp. 28-29, 2008.
- [2] Nordmann, P. et al., *Lancet Infect Dis.*, **9**, 228, 2009.
- [3] Chirila, E. et al., *Ovidius University Annals of Chemistry*, **25**, 75, 2014
- [4] Aftel, M., *Essence & Alchemy – A book of perfume*, USA, North Point Press, 2001.
- [5] Ali, S.M., Yosipovitch G., *Acta Derm. Venereol.*, **93**, 261, 2013.
- [6] Lu, H. et al., *Afr. J. Microbiol. Res.*, **4**, 309, 2010.
- [7] Drucker, P., *Management: Tasks, Responsibilities, Practices*, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.
- [8] Kotler, P., *Ten Deadly Marketing Sins*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2004
- [9] Norman, H., *A Career in Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations*. Great Britain: Biddies Ltd., 1980.