

MODERN APPROACHES TO MARKETING MANAGEMENT: THE PRACTICE OF MOLDOVAN COMPANIES

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Abstract. *Effective marketing management is a crucial condition for the sustainable development of companies in a highly dynamic market environment. Modern marketing management requires not only the implementation of innovative tools but also a comprehensive approach to management, strategic planning, and adaptation to external changes. Drawing on theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis of forth companies (case study) in the Republic of Moldova, the paper explores the practical application of agile marketing, omnichannel integration, data-driven decision-making, and ESG-oriented strategies. The findings reveal that the successful implementation of these approaches enhances customer experience, operational adaptability, and long-term brand value. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of how marketing management evolves into a holistic, value-driven paradigm.*

Keywords: *marketing management, strategic planning, agile marketing, omnichannel strategies, data-driven marketing, ESG, corporate responsibility*

JEL codes: *M00, M11, M30, M31*

Introduction

Approaches to defining marketing management are constantly evolving, reflecting transformations. Definitions and approaches to marketing management have evolved in response to business environment transformations driven by digitalization and technological advancements. While classical models such as 4P, 7P, and STP were once central, modern frameworks redefine marketing management as a holistic system built upon data, technologies, and organizational values.

The rise of digital platforms, automation, big data, and AI has intensified the role of analytics and personalization. Marketing management now entails not only strategic planning and campaign execution but also real-time monitoring and adaptation. Flexibility and customer-centricity are prioritized, along with the need to incorporate economic, social, ethical, and environmental dimensions. Digital transformation complements marketing with automated analytics and sustainability principles, demanding marketers with updated competencies and agile mindsets. Consequently, marketing management has become integrative-strategic, technological, and value-driven-shifting from a functional role to a paradigm aligned with the digital economy and evolving consumer expectations. Globalization and mobile technologies further expand companies' reach, requiring adaptive and digitally competent marketing systems.

The objective of this study is to synthesize and analyze modern approaches to marketing management, with a focus on data-driven strategies, flexible management models, and sustainability principles, as well as to identify the specific features of their practical application by companies in the Republic of Moldova.

Literature Review

Kotler (2003) defines marketing management as the art and science of selecting target markets and acquiring, retaining, and growing a customer base by creating and delivering superior value. He emphasizes the balance between strategy and tactics, analytics and creativity, and a strong customer orientation. Lambin (2007) views marketing management as a social process aimed at adapting the enterprise to a changing external environment. He considers marketing a strategic management tool essential for building sustainable market positions in conditions of high uncertainty and competition.

David Aaker (2011) introduces branding as a key component of marketing management, emphasizing the importance of building, maintaining, and developing brands as intangible assets that determine competitiveness and customer loyalty.

With the onset of digital transformation in marketing activities, new approaches and tools have emerged, requiring a rethinking of traditional marketing management. Digital marketing strategy integrates online and offline channels, the use of data and technology to achieve business goals (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Digitalization has not only changed communication channels but also transformed the ways companies interact with customers, enabling deep personalization, automation, and real-time analytics.

The dynamic changes in the external environment, the development of digital technologies, the growing importance of customer experience, and the increasing role of data and analytics in decision-making have contributed to the continuous expansion and deepening of marketing management. Whereas previously marketing management was primarily seen as a process of planning, executing, and controlling marketing activities aimed at satisfying customer needs and achieving profits, it has now evolved into a more complex concept under the conditions of digital transformation. The American Marketing Association (2023) highlights marketing management as a cyclical, systematic process aimed at meeting target market needs while achieving organizational objectives. This definition reflects the modern managerial essence of the concept, highlighting the cyclical and systematic nature of the process.

Contemporary marketing practice increasingly relies on digital technologies, analytical tools, and flexible management models. As a result, several key areas have come to the forefront: Digital Marketing, enabling multichannel communication with consumers; Agile Marketing, allowing for rapid adaptation to market changes; Omnichannel Marketing, which creates a unified user experience across all touchpoints; Personalized Marketing, based on data analysis and individual customer approaches; Data-Driven Marketing, where decisions are made based on deep analytics; and ESG and ethical marketing, which focus on sustainable development, transparency, and corporate social responsibility. These approaches reflect a new reality in which marketing is not only a promotional tool but also a strategic component of a company's digital transformation.

Dave Chaffey (Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F., 2019) presents digital marketing as a process built around six key components (the "6Ds"), which form the foundation of digital marketing:

1. Digital Devices – smartphones, personal computers, tablets, and smart devices;
2. Digital Platforms – social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram), email services, messaging apps, marketplaces (e.g., PandaShop, 999.md), and search engines (e.g., Google, Yandex);
3. Digital Media – SEO, email marketing, social networks, PPC (pay-per-click advertising);
4. Digital Data – demographic data, preferences, purchase history, interactions, and geolocation;
5. Digital Technology – analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics), artificial intelligence and machine learning, CRM systems, and real-time personalization technologies;
6. Digital Transformation – the integration of digital technologies at all levels of business operations.

Agile Marketing is a flexible and iterative approach to marketing based on the principles of adaptability, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Rooted in Agile methodologies originally developed for software engineering (such as Scrum and Kanban), it adapts these principles to manage marketing processes, allowing teams to work more flexibly, iteratively, and cohesively (Accardi-Petersen, 2012).

The first stage in Agile marketing management involves setting SMART goals—Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound. This ensures clarity of objectives and success criteria. Next, key performance indicators (KPIs) are defined—reach, engagement, conversion, ROI, and others necessary to evaluate campaign effectiveness. Then, consumer personas are developed—archetypal profiles of customers that enable the creation of personalized offers.

The following step is Customer Journey Mapping, which identifies key touchpoints and potential "pain points" in the customer experience. A backlog of tasks is created for execution within short cycles or sprints (1–2 weeks), after which results are analyzed to identify improvement areas. Daily stand-ups, brief coordination meetings, are held to enhance transparency and operational efficiency. A key element is continuous testing and adaptation, including A/B testing and real-time data analysis (Gera, Gera, & Mishra, 2019).

Omnichannel Marketing involves not just the presence of multiple customer interaction channels but their deep integration. The approach ensures a seamless and consistent user experience, regardless of the device or platform being used (Palmatier, R. W., 2019).

Personalized Marketing enables businesses to tailor their marketing efforts to the individual needs, interests, and preferences of each specific customer (Chandra, 2022), using data to generate relevant and targeted messages, offers, and experiences (International Journal of Computer Applications, 2023). A company applying personalized marketing should meet the following criteria: data collection and usage; use of CRM or CDP systems; personalized communications; real-time dynamic personalization; A/B testing and machine learning; segmentation down to the "segment of one"; and transparency with a strong commitment to privacy compliance.

Data-driven marketing refers to the use of customer, behavioral, market, and operational data to personalize marketing messages, optimize communication channels, increase ROI, and enhance the overall customer experience (Wedel, M., & Kannan, P. K., 2016). This type of marketing provides the foundation—an analytical infrastructure, data processing tools, and a systematic approach to decision-making—covering the entire cycle from data collection to strategic planning of marketing activities, market segmentation, demand forecasting, and evaluation of campaign effectiveness.

ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) is a management approach that considers the environmental, social, and governance aspects of a company's operations.

Within marketing management, ESG influences the following:

- brand development: companies communicate values of sustainability and social responsibility, thereby strengthening trust and customer loyalty;
- communications: marketing campaigns focus on transparency, green initiatives, and honesty;
- packaging and product: the use of environmentally friendly materials and sustainable supply chains becomes an integral part of brand positioning.

Ethical marketing is an approach in which marketing practices are grounded in the principles of honesty, responsibility, and respect for consumers and society as a whole. It involves adherence to moral norms across all aspects of marketing—from product development to promotion and sales. Ethical marketing includes honest representation of products and services, fair pricing, responsible advertising practices, and respect for the cultural and social values of consumers (Lee & Jin, 2019).

Methodology

A qualitative case study method was employed, which provides a deep understanding of how marketing concepts are implemented in specific organizational contexts and allows for a comprehensive analysis that encompasses both strategic and operational dimensions of marketing activity. The research focused on four companies operating in the Republic of Moldova: MakeUp.md, METRO Moldova, Linella, and Kaufland Moldova. The selection of cases was based on several key criteria: active market presence, high brand recognition, diversity of marketing tools used, and availability of information about company activities in open sources. The companies represent different retail formats—from online retail to chain hypermarkets—allowing for the identification of distinctive marketing approaches across various business types.

Data for analysis were collected from official company websites, news publications, social media pages, online reports, promotional campaign materials, and customer loyalty programs. The use of various sources ensured the validity and reliability of the collected information.

It should be noted that the research has certain limitations. Relying primarily on qualitative data, it does not allow for a quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of the implemented strategies.

Research Results

Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of the implementation of key modern approaches to marketing management in four companies, highlighting the distinctive features of how each company applies its marketing strategies. All have embraced digital transformation, data-driven tools, and elements of agile and personalized marketing. However, implementation depth varies.

Table 1. Implementation of Modern Approaches to Marketing Management in Companies of the Republic of Moldova (Case Study)

Company	MakeUp.md	METRO Moldova	Linella	Kaufland Moldova
Agile Marketing	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes
Omnichannel Marketing	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Personalized Marketing	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes
Data Driven Marketing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Digital transformation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
ESG / Ethical Marketing	Not specified	Partially	Yes	Partially
Features of implementation	Extensive use of digital tools, email marketing, automatic notifications, beauty blog	Online platform and mobile application, integration with physical stores, METRO Plus program	Using AI for forecasting, assortment analytics, supporting local producers, sustainability	AI tools for creative generation and personalization, digital loyalty card, focus on authenticity

Source: developed by the author

MakeUp.md is one of the most prominent examples of active digital marketing tool implementation on the Moldovan market. The company is part of the international MakeUp group, specializing in online sales of cosmetics and perfumes. To effectively engage with customers, MakeUp.md utilizes a wide range of digital tools: over 2 million Facebook followers, more than 700,000 Instagram followers, a YouTube channel, an online digest, a beauty editorial blog, over 3 million product reviews on the website, and a dedicated community — the Makeup Club — for sharing beauty tips and experiences. The company also actively uses email marketing and web analytics tools.

One example of MakeUp.md's personalized marketing approach is the automatic notification feature. When a customer adds a product to their cart, they can receive an email if the price of that product drops. Additionally, if the desired item is temporarily out of stock, the user can request a restock notification, which is sent as soon as the product becomes available.

A noteworthy example of effective omnichannel marketing implementation in Moldova is METRO Moldova. The company has created an integrated ecosystem of digital and physical channels, ensuring convenience, flexibility, and a personalized customer experience at every stage of interaction. For wholesale buyers, an online platform called MShop has been developed, offering easy ordering and full access to the product range. For retail customers, the Zakaz delivery system is available — via both website and mobile app — with home delivery service.

The METRO Companion mobile app provides users with access to a digital membership card, purchase history, bonus points, and personalized offers, effectively integrating online and offline experiences. Additionally, the METRO Plus loyalty program offers customers bonus points, individual discounts, and special promotions based on analysis of purchasing behavior. One of the key elements of METRO's omnichannel strategy is the consistency between digital platforms and physical stores. For example, customers can place an order online and pick it up at the nearest store, offering convenience and flexibility.

Both MakeUp.md and METRO partially implement personalized marketing tools. MakeUp.md, for instance, uses personalized email newsletters featuring products that may interest specific users. This is made possible through behavioral analysis on the website, including browsing history, items added to the cart, and previous purchases.

METRO Moldova, on the other hand, leverages the METRO Plus loyalty program, through which customers receive personalized discounts and offers based on the analysis of their purchase history, visit frequency, and product preferences. Additionally, through the METRO Companion mobile app, users receive customized recommendations and notifications, enabling marketing communications to be tailored to the interests of specific audience segments.

Linella, the largest national supermarket chain in the Republic of Moldova, actively implements modern marketing management approaches, including digital marketing, agile marketing, omnichannel strategies, data-driven marketing, as well as ESG and ethical marketing. Linella maintains a strong online presence through its official website, where up-to-date offers, recipes, and contests are featured. The company actively uses social media to promote campaigns and engage with customers. The online store was designed in line with corporate branding and ensures real-time synchronization of prices and inventory, enabling customers to access accurate product availability information.

The company actively uses analytical tools to optimize its product assortment and manage product categories. The implementation of solutions from SymphonyAI and Num8erz.Range has enabled the company to increase demand forecasting accuracy to 95% and improve product availability on shelves to 80%. Data analysis has shown that the system implementation brought the following benefits to Linella:

1. Inventory optimization. Improved forecast accuracy allowed for a reduction in excess inventory, freeing up working capital and space in retail outlets.
2. Reduced labor for order processing. Transitioning from a decentralized to a centralized ordering approach reduced the time needed to create orders and allowed store personnel and managers to focus on other tasks, as well as decreasing the number of errors.
3. Improved product availability. With user-friendly dashboards, stores monitor product availability for each item and category daily, helping to prevent stockouts and avoid lost sales.
4. Enhanced central office control. The system generates orders based on sales history and considers numerous factors, including promotions, delivery schedules, and shipment timings. Eliminating the need to recheck centralized orders has shortened processing times.
5. Shelf stock presentation. Empty shelves or products that appear aged on display can frustrate customers. The system considers the amount of display stock required until the next delivery, helping to prevent shelf gaps and improve the shopping experience.

Linella provides a seamless shopping experience through various channels: physical stores, an online platform, and a mobile app. Its loyalty program is integrated across all channels, enabling customers to earn and redeem bonuses regardless of their shopping method. The company places great emphasis on sustainability and social responsibility, supporting local producers by offering more than 50% of its products from local sources. It also implements environmental initiatives such as installing solar panels, electric vehicle charging stations, and using biodegradable bags.

Kaufland Moldova is actively developing its digital channels. The digital loyalty card *Kaufland Card*

was launched, and its usage share has grown from 30% to 70% between 2019 and 2024. Investments in digital tools have increased significantly—by over 400%—including in social media, mobile apps, and display advertising (GDN).

To visualize video project concepts, Kaufland uses artificial intelligence tools such as Midjourney, which help quickly generate moodboard options based on detailed technical briefs. This accelerates the creative preparation stage, offers visual ideas to the team, and simplifies the coordination process with contractors. Additionally, to personalize promotional offers for customers, the company applies AI solutions like Reko, which analyze purchase data and user preferences to create personalized promotions and recommendations. These tools help Kaufland deliver more relevant offers, enhancing response rates and customer loyalty.

Despite digitalization, the company emphasizes the human factor, emotions, and authenticity in communication. AI is regarded as an auxiliary tool, but decision-making and creative output remain human-driven.

Conclusion

Modern conditions of digital transformation, rapid technological advancement, and fast-changing consumer behavior present new challenges for businesses, requiring companies to shift toward more complex, flexible, and adaptive models of marketing management. Traditional methods of promotion and customer interaction are no longer sufficient to meet the expectations of today's consumer, who values personalization, convenience, transparency, and corporate social responsibility.

The practices of companies such as Kaufland Moldova, Linella, MakeUp.md, and Metro Moldova illustrate the successful integration of contemporary marketing management approaches, which combine digital technologies, agile methodologies, omnichannel communication, and data-driven solutions. The use of digital marketing allows companies to expand audience reach, respond swiftly to changing demand, and effectively personalize the customer experience. Agile methods support the rapid adjustment of marketing strategies, hypothesis testing, and fast decision-making.

Thus, marketing management is evolving from a set of operational functions into a comprehensive managerial paradigm, integrated into business strategy and grounded in principles of flexibility, analytics, and sustainability. Companies aiming for long-term growth must develop not only a marketing toolkit but also the infrastructure to manage and leverage it effectively.

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