

**Value marketing as a Determinant of Forming a
Political Offer in the Process of Communication
between Politicians and Voters**

Political Preferences
2018, vol. 18: 91-102.
DOI: 10.6084/m9.figshare.6025298
journals.us.edu.pl/index.php/PP
Submitted: 24/07/2017
Accepted: 01/10/2017



Wiktor Widera

University of Economics in Katowice, Poland

Abstract:

At the heart of the concept of value marketing is the evolution of its use. Starting with a mere information about the presence of a product on the market, through subsequently satisfying the needs of the buyer of the product or service, to finally reaching a full dialogue between the bidder (offerer) and the customer. This relationship is based, inter alia, on the common definition of the characteristics of the desired goods and their adjustment to the values indicated by the customers. Also, important values for the buyer of a political product should be similarly shaped in the marketing sense. Creating bonds, the partnership relations between the exchange parties on the political market is a mechanism that makes this process very effective. The article points to the “value” present in the political product and explains how it is created. It also analyses two key contexts of what “value” is, describes marketing and its core tools on the economic and political market. The author of the paper makes a hypothesis that “value” as the core of the political offer generated by the politician-voter relationship is of fundamental importance in political transactions and is at the same time a determinant of electoral decision.

Key words:

value, value marketing, provision of value, voter, politician, political offer, political market

The concept of value in the marketing process

The penetration of marketing mechanisms from the economic market to the political market is confirmed by a statement of Michał Jaśniok (2016) in his article on the concept of building system products on the local political market: “The growing awareness of market pressures draws the attention of politicians to theory and practice of political marketing that hopes to find ways to optimize decisions, including strategic decisions. However, a review of literature suggests that most of the research devoted to political processes is done by researchers

working in the field of humanities (especially in the fields of sociology, psychology and law) which popularizes such concepts as political scene, the actors of the political game. Relatively few research studies devoted to direct political marketing use the conceptual apparatus of management science to describe political processes. In particular, the issue of a specific type of political offer – the system products - allowing for a different, often improved, sometimes completely innovative way of satisfying the needs of different types of stakeholders operating on the political market - has not been recognized or described” (Jaśniok 2016: 26).

The cited quotation, referring to the problem, should be supplemented by invoking another significant statement by the author: The foundation for shaping the systemic offer of a political product, as is the case on other markets (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004: 36) are certain solutions in the marketing sphere characterized by a modified approach to customer (voter) value creation, its provision and communication (Jaśniok 2016: 36).

Penetration of marketing mechanisms applied in the business of the enterprise to the area of the political market can significantly enrich its instruments and tools, as their effectiveness has already been verified on the economic market. Significant determinants are also technological progress or innovation, which allow access of its subjects to practically unlimited financial resources. Unlike the political market, however, a continuous pursuit of profit results in the search for new ways to achieve it, and the need to frequently repeat the exchange transactions intensifies these efforts.

The common core of marketing design, in marketing on the economic and political market, which is the center of attention of the author of the article as well as quoted Jaśniok is “value” constituting one of the fundamental purchasing determinants. The buyer not only identifies with the product that is enriched with this value, but also with the product which is the result of the joint creation. The author of the article, however, emphasizes the understanding of “value” as a result of the bidder – receiver relation, whereas Jaśniok points to the “value” which is the feature of the offer made to the recipient. Hence, the nature of the discussion is bipolar. In the first context, the “value” comes directly from the concept of value marketing, while in the second, from the concept of the customer value management. Nevertheless, in political marketing, both these “values” can and should be complementary.

Marketing - search for analogies

Underlying the application of social marketing, including the political market, is the success that results from the efficient exchange of the product or service offered, into the value desired by a company. Social organizations, companies, and individual professionals similarly, in the process of soliciting the client, constantly apply methods, techniques and marketing instruments. The goal of the entrepreneur is financial gain, the policy of winning the electorate, the artist, in addition to financial gain seeks publicity and fame.

All these cases have a common feature and one common denominator of the actions being performed. This is the desire to create in the customer, in the nearer or more distant environment, the need to own the goods offered. In addition, the desired effect is the awareness of the customer's participation in the activities around which the offer is being formed. The bidders, at the same time, strive for a one-off sale and, optimally, consistently with the adopted marketing strategy, to its multiplication. Repetitiveness of transactions is usually the result of building a long-term relationship between the bidder and the client. Sales obviously depends not only on the relevance of marketing activities, but also on, among others, the characteristics of the product and the purchasing power of the buyer.

According to Jaśniok, “building of the long-term relationships with voters through the use of digital communication will make the groupings more open, and the most important element of social capital is loyalty of voters. Networks, not hierarchies, are becoming a key form of shaping the product offer on the transforming political market” (Mueller-Seitz 2012: 33). Confronted with the marketing objectives of relationships used on the economic market, and, as a result, also on the political market, the long-term relationships modify the behaviour of the bidders, while the effect of loyalty of the stakeholders is the goal of their actions. Jaśniok confirms the author's thought when writing about digital communication, whose origins and development should be sought on the economic market. It should be noted, however, that the technological innovations present on the market were most often based on state funds in the military sector, which, due to their importance and resulting consequences, should be treated separately and clearly marked in the formation of genotypes of technological solutions. Hence, apart from the economic market and the vast social market, there is a market of security and public order.

Formation of the product on the economic market is to satisfy, and often generate, the need of the customer for the provided product or service. It is to meet the customer's vital needs

of elementary importance or of other significance, including higher needs. The pursuit of an effective exchange transaction is determined by the buyer's characteristics, such as the financial resources, cultural attributes, environmental impact, and, of course, the impact of successful marketing activities. In political marketing, the identified purchasing determinants are almost analogous, with the exception of the financial determinant in the universal sense, which is of fundamental importance on the economic market. However, it must be stated that the financial determinant on the political market will be related not only to the buyer's purchasing power, but also to the financial gain resulting from the outcome of the political activities. The effect of creating a need for a product is a frequent reason for changing electoral preferences.

A client on the economic market and a voter on the political market is not just passive, under the influence. Occasionally he becomes an active part in the dialogue with the bidder. In many cases, using the communication technologies identified by Jaśniok, the client has the opportunity to exert influence himself by programming his or her actions to stimulate interest in their views or evaluations of the primary bidders. The customer/voter can also effectively review product offers, political offers, or, using his or her personal skills, create the offers on their own, and add features to the products that will distinguish them from others. This mechanism, which can be described as elements of marketing activities, does not need to be focused solely on gaining financial results. When backed up by effective marketing it can strive to meet other needs: aspirational, emotional, creative, or the need to be present in the political life or social environment. The need to create an offer leads to the dissemination of the values that the product is marked for.

The evolution of marketing on the economic and political market shows common features. At the heart of marketing on the economic market, there was a sense of confusion about the presence of a product on the market caused by the competition. Marketing 1.0 focused on providing the prospective customer with the widest possible information, exposing the features of the product that were supposed to mobilize the customer to acquire it. The primary purpose of political marketing was to inform voters of the political product. It described politicians and their grouping, in this way becoming a party in a "political game", and by creating a political program, the marketers also produced a political product. Its development was also determined by competition. Although for the first-time political marketing appeared in the presently known form in 1941, in 1952 in the presidential elections in the US, and in 1959 for the first time in the

United Kingdom in parliamentary elections, the political activities and alleged sales activities originated much earlier.

In historical terms, the presence of politics was recognized in antiquity, and in almost all geographic regions in which civilization developed. This phenomenon was most vividly described by the Greek philosophers: Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle. They showed the meaning and goals of politics through the prism of the state as a political organization of society. They also saw that politics was a commodity which the various social strata were fighting for (Muszyński 1999: 19). This statement is of fundamental importance for seeking economic and political market unions. Although they are not identical, analogies between them are historically justified. Following the philosophical reflection of the relationship between man and politics, it is necessary to recall the views of Plessner, who argued that politics transcends all interrelationships. “Politics takes place between a man and a woman, (...) the teacher and the student, (...) the artist and his principal and in any private relations, just like in the public sphere there are legal, economic, cultural, religious and social forms of policy along with the main state and political party policy”. The political nature of man is thus an optimal ground for the functioning of the political market, where a political product is created based on the needs and values (Plessner 1994: 72). The political nature of a man who is, according to the opinions in question, the primary determinant of the purchase of a political product.

The political nature of a man has set a particularly important element of the political market and political market-related behaviour – the political leadership, which seems to be a historical factor in the significant influence on the development of civilization. Leszek Sobkowiak (2002: 20) defines political action as: “a form of political behaviour consisting of rational, targeted and arbitrary conduct of an entity fulfilling its needs, interests and values - under conditions of conformity and/or contradiction, cooperation and/or conflict with other entities – connected directly or indirectly with political authority”. From the perspective of political marketing, leadership can be seen as a form of peculiar pressure on the processes of creating and functioning of the political market, including the final transaction of this market (Muszyński 2001: 169). The pursuit of political leadership is, in a sense, a phenomenon that triggers enormous decks of social activity.

On the political market, following the thought of Michał Jaśniok, under democratic conditions, the acquisition of power consists in gaining social acceptance by creating a specific

set of benefits for the voters. Under conditions of competition and pluralism, this process is carried out on the political market which we are talking about when four conditions are fulfilled simultaneously (Jaśniok 2016: 27):

- there are at least two parties of exchange with unmet political needs,
- there is will and means to meet these needs,
- there is the possibility of dialogue between the parties,
- there is exchange on offer.

Political leadership, unlike management on the economic market, is strictly personalized and is a clear feature of the product, often determining the effectiveness of the exchange for votes. On the economic market, personal identification is less significant for the buyer.

Evolution of marketing

During the improvement of the marketing process, the concept of understanding and satisfying the client's needs has emerged as it has been recognized that the repeatability of transactions is guaranteed not only by the attractiveness of the offer, but also by maintaining a constant relationship with the recipient. Recognizing the nature of the customer through marketing research has facilitated the professionalization, not only of the first element of the marketing mix chain which is the product itself, but also the adjustment of the right price, distribution method, the techniques of promotion and advertising as well. Marketing 2.0 was identified with the concept of satisfying needs, pioneered in the information age, where information technology began to play a key role. Consumers are well informed in this regard and can easily compare, for their own benefit, several similar offers. The value of the product is defined by them, and their preferences are very diverse. The marketer acted on the basis of a well-thought-out strategy, had to divide the market into segments and develop the best product that was targeted to a specific market. The strategic goal was to make a product that could successfully compete with other products and other bidders on the market (Widera & Sarna 2016: 21).

The recognition of customer's needs has become unequivocal to inspire the recipient of the formed bids, to actively participate in their emergence, and a constant dialogue with the manufacturer or service provider. As a result, this phenomenon has caused certain behaviour with bidders to be currently perceived as innovative.

So, what is the difference between the customer-oriented marketing 2.0 and the new approach resulting from the evolution, the 3.0 marketing? This marketing is referred to as a value in which the value jointly obtained by the bidder and the consumer is a particularly important determinant of the exchange transaction. The product in the marketing process, apart from emphasizing its elementary utility, has to satisfy the higher wishes and desires of the customer, serve the higher purpose of improving the world. In this context, in addition to making a profit as the cornerstone of any business, bidders become involved in solving social problems.

Marketing 3.0 empowered the consumer, recognized his/her aspirations, values and spirit. “Paradoxically, in times of crisis, marketing 3.0 was supposed to be a panacea for the neo-liberal concept of the world development in which the marketing tool causes violent change, economic, social and environmental turbulence” (Widera & Sarna 2016: 22). According to Philip Kotler, “marketing 3.0 provides the answer to the misery, and fills concerned people's hearts with hope, so that bidders are entering a higher level of communication with their customers” (2010: 17-18). By using Kotler's phrasing, political marketing should provide answers to “social insecurity and pour hope into the hearts of the concerned people, so that politicians and their groups can step up to a higher level of communication with their constituents”.

“Marketing 3.0 launches the value-oriented era. There is no nameless consumer any more - there is a human being. A man who has his or her reason, heart and soul. An increasing number of these customers are trying to find a solution to their problems, striving to fulfill their dreams - looking for something that will make the world a better place for them. In a world where nothing is certain, they are looking for companies that in their mission, vision and the set of corporate values emphasize goals that meet the consumers' deepest desire for social, economic and environmental justice. They do not just expect that the product or service will meet their functional and emotional needs. They make a purchase expecting to fulfill their spiritual requirements” (Widera & Sarna 2016: 22).

When identifying with Kotler's views, marketing 3.0 must be perceived by approaching a potential and actual buyer as a human being, in full understanding of the word. The potential characteristics of such a consumer, above all as a human, are described by Stephen R. Covey, who specifies four elements:

1. The physical body;
2. The mind, being capable of forming an independent thought and making analysis;

3. The heart able to feel emotions;
4. The spirit - the soul understood as the philosophical center of being.

The mind, as a valid marketing term, appeared in the concept of the consumer mind, described in the book “Positioning” by Al Ries and Jack Trout (Shih 2012). In the next period, attention was paid to the emotional component of the human psyche, in connection with consumer’s decisions. The special advantage of marketing 3.0 is the appearance of perceiving an important element defined as the “consumer spirit”. It began with understanding his/her desires, inhibitions and fears. “Bidders of products and services were forced to treat their clients as wholesome human beings, consisting of mind, heart and spirit.” (Kotler 2010: 52, 53).

Marketing 3.0 is illustrated by a triangle which consists of brand, positioning and distinction on the market. Kotler completed the 3.0 symbol with the symbol 3.i, i.e. brand identity, integrity and image, justifying it as follows: “In a world of horizontal relationships between consumers the brand does not matter if it is simply positioned. It can have a very clear identity in the minds of customers, though not necessarily a positive one. Positioning is just a branding statement made by the company, which only sharpens the vigilance of customers towards non-authentic products. In other words, the triangle is incomplete without a product distinction strategy. The distinction is ensured by the brand DNA that reflects its honesty. This is a solid proof that the brand delivers what it promises. This is primarily about ensuring the promised product performance and consumer satisfaction. Creating brand identity is about positioning a given brand in the minds of consumers. It should be unique so that the brand does not go unnoticed in the crowded market” (Widera & Pravdova 2016).

System products in marketing

In the context of perceiving the common characteristics of political marketing and economic marketing, how closely related are the 'system products on the local political market', researched and described by Michał Jaśniok, to the deliberations on the meaning of “value”? Jaśniok, basing his inference on the aforementioned term, writes: “Identifying and analyzing the key problems of marketing system products on the political market in the process of shaping the value for the electorate” (2010: 26). According to Leszek Żabiński (2013: 3), the “system products (products of knowledge, modern or technologically complex products) are a new generation of complex, multi-core products, including service products whose emergence in

highly developed, market-oriented economies has enabled a dynamic technological progress, particularly in the field of microelectronics and information technology”.

Jaśniok presents the concept of designing system products through their values for voters and other types of stakeholders, taking into account the specificity of the environment in which they occur. When conducting a survey in closer environment, Jaśniok analyzes five local entities in which he saw the innovation in marketing strategy implementation processes that are based on the concept of system products. The research included the political groups that submitted the lists of candidates in municipal elections to such local authorities as: the district (Bieruńsko-łędzki), the town (Bieruń) and to districts on city rights (Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gliwice) in 2014. The main research method was the internal participant observation. In particular, there were: a constant penetration of the websites of the entities, the analysis of press articles, the analysis of the presentation of strategic assumptions (electoral, training and program materials) and announcements issued by individuals/councils/boards authorized to represent the entities outside (Jaśniok 2010: 26-27).

The close link to economic marketing manifests itself when there is, emphasized by the author, “awareness of the complexity of the composition of a political product (in the theoretical layer), which reveals the potential for strategic product choices in relation to product strategies, and the resulting consequences for the marketing strategy of the political entity”. One of the options with significant strategic consequences is the decision to create systemic products by the political market entities. Under this concept we mean here an offer that includes not one but several products, satisfying the needs attributed to more than one level of needs (Żabiński 2013). Product systematism appears when the entities find it beneficial that the product is used extensively by other users with whom they interact (Szymura-Tyc 2012: 54). The foundations of this offer, as is the case on other markets (Prahalad & Ramaswamy 2004: 210), are specific solutions in the marketing sphere characterized by a modified approach to customer (voter) value creation and its delivery and communication. “In the process of planning and marketing products based on a system model it is necessary to make decisions that shape the political offer in three dimensions of perception simultaneously: cognitive, affective, and conative, in such a way that it satisfies the diverse needs of the voter in the most complete manner, also not directly related to politics” (Jaśniok 2010: 28).

The perception of system products on the political market should be complemented by

their essence in the marketing concept that emerges on the economic market. Leszek Żabiński puts it in the following way: “Nowadays, this new field of products is of great interest in contemporary marketing practice because:

1. A frequent, active involvement of consumers, suppliers and business intermediaries in the creation of a systemic product (the so-called open innovation model) requires a change of traditional, one-way market orientation of the company to the target customer for a new, multidimensional orientation to the company stakeholders and their knowledge;
2. Market offers of system products become a new, more effective and efficient basis/base for competition and co-operation between businesses, quite often supported by state efforts to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of the whole economy (at the international level) and to modernise consumption structures;
3. In general, the innovative nature of system products and the active participation of consumers and other stakeholders in the enterprise (its employees, distributors, local communities) in the creation and delivery of multiple values for the customers requires other than the classic organization of marketing activities, systems of their management, and often implementation of different, innovative business concepts.

Unlike traditional tangible goods or services, the so-called monoproducts, thanks to many parallel values (benefits) provided for the consumers, they meet many needs and expectations, both complementary and autonomous, considered important in different areas of needs and consumption. Creation and dissemination of system products also generally requires new innovative business models and business management concepts” (Żabiński 2013).

Value marketing or value delivery marketing

Based on the two terms of “value” identically applicable to the economic market, when it is to be characterized on the political market the question arises: how the 'values' identified by Michał Jaśniok, especially after mentioning the paper of Leszek Żabiński, are complementary to the Kotler's concept of value marketing, and how useful are they merely in the context of the customer value management concept, which in essence is a management concept that responds to the key customer role for the functioning of the business? It is worth noting, on the margin of reflection, it is a common practice for many researchers who often use different concepts to describe the same phenomena. Żabiński states: “Thanks to the bundle of many parallel values

(benefits) to the consumer they simultaneously satisfy several/many of his/her needs and expectations”.

The literal quotation of Jaśniok seems to clearly refer to the concept of customer value management: “The offer addressed to target groups on the political market can have features of a system product if it contains a whole set of values for the voter (...). At this point, it is necessary to clarify that 'customer value management is understood to be a management approach that treats customers as a business asset whose value can be measured and enhanced through the organization of processes around relationships” (Doligalski 2013).

The difference in the meaning of the term “value” may be interesting in the light of the current considerations because Kotler's “values” are activities that involve the joint building of “value” in the process of creating the product by the bidder and the receiver (also the political offer), while in the concept of customer value management the customer related processes, according to R. Blattberg et al., represent customer value management from the perspective of three processes: customer acquisition, additional sales, and advocating loyalty (Doligalski 2013).

How should one understand providing value of system products on the political market for the voters to the process of value creation when forming them? Is the delivery of the offer exclusive of building it with a prospective customer - a voter? The inspiration of Jaśniok's article leads to the development of these interesting considerations about the definition of “value” in the process of building and delivering system products, about the process of their creation taking into account the concept of value marketing. Thus, he encourages discussion about the creative transfer of market researchers findings from the economic market to other areas, including political marketing. However, in the light of the aforementioned thinking on the political nature of man, political marketing, and, more specifically, its features, seem to have a much longer tradition than is commonly described.

Conclusion

Michał Jaśniok's paper, supported by research results, is an interesting attempt to tackle the transfer of marketing instruments present on the economic market to the political market. It is important, as the author states, that such practice is scantily described in scientific publications. Through his work, he provokes an additional question: to what extent is invoking concepts arising from the economic market, terminology used in descriptions, and later transferred to

another area, legible and unequivocal?

Should one include in the process of delivering value for the stakeholders (customers) of political offer, according to the theory of customer value management, the element of building offers in accordance with the Kotler's concept of marketing 3.0? Common sense seems to suggest a simple solution: the product should be created in the process of constant relations and building it with the customer, which does not exclude, and even enriches, the process of delivering the product from the bidder to the recipient.

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