Olena Kolomytseva[*]
Doctor of Economics, Professor
Cherkasy State Technological University
18006, 460 Shevchenko Blvd., Cherkasy, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6769-0590

Oleksii Vasylchenko
Postgraduate Student
Cherkasy State Technological University
18006, 460 Shevchenko Blvd., Cherkasy, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5451-2174

Arman Akhtoian
Cherkasy State Technological University
18006, 460 Shevchenko Blvd., Cherkasy, Ukraine
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2928-7765

Brand fandoms as a catalyst for long-term consumer relationships

Abstract. The relevance of the study is due to the growing significance of fan communities in modern marketing, where traditional customer loyalty is increasingly transformed into active participation and advocacy of the brand. The purpose of the article was to study the phenomenon of brand fandoms as an innovative tool for building long-term relationships between consumers and brands. The methodological framework was based on the analysis of scientific sources, a comparison of existing models of interaction between brands and fan communities, as well as a case analysis of leading companies. The article reveals the essence of the brand fandom phenomenon in the context of creating and maintaining long-term consumer relationships and examines examples of its effective use in both international and domestic practice. The main models of interaction with fan communities are highlighted, and the prerogatives of fandoms in enhancing emotional loyalty and brand value are determined. Key characteristics of fandom communities and their impact on long-term loyalty, brand advocacy, and value co-creation are identified. A comparative description of classic relationship marketing and brand fandoms is provided. The study analyses and systematises in detail five key models of brand interaction with fan communities: Brand-Centric Model, Co-Creation Model, Ambassador/Advocacy Model, Community-Led Model, and Gamified Loyalty & Engagement Model. The effectiveness of each model has been found to depend on the brand's goals, the level of control and the expected level of community engagement. Practical evidence confirms the feasibility of using both standalone and hybrid models to achieve the maximum level of emotional attachment of consumers and enhance competitive advantages in a dynamic market environment. The obtained results demonstrate that fan communities can serve as an effective mechanism for co-creating brand values, enhancing emotional attachment, and stabilising the consumer base through hybrid engagement models. The practical value of the study lies in the possibility of adapting the developed interaction models for various business sectors in order to increase brand competitiveness and build sustainable marketing strategies in the digital age

Keywords: brand advocacy, fan communities, relationship marketing, emotional loyalty, "brand love"

*Corresponding author

Introduction

In today's world of rapid digitalisation and constant competition between brands, the building of long-term consumer relationships comes to the fore in marketing interaction strategies. Traditional engagement tools are losing their effectiveness, giving way to more emotionally focused, authentic and interactive approaches. Brand fandoms - communities of consumers, which identify themselves with a brand, participate in its development, produce their own content and become carriers of the company's values - are one such phenomenon that is actively gaining momentum in the global market.

Companies such as LEGO, Nike, Apple, Monobank and collaborations such as BTS and Samsung have shown the growing role of fan communities in building loyalty, enhancing the client's life cycle and generating brand capital. Fandoms that arise organically or as a result of a well-thought-out strategy turn ordinary consumers into brand ambassadors, which significantly enhances the effect of relationship marketing. At the same time, the issue of systemic analysis of the role of brand fan communities as a catalyst for long-term consumer relationships remains insufficiently developed in scientific literature, especially in the context of the Ukrainian market.

The relevance of the study is due to the need for a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of interaction between brands and fan communities, as well as the potential of such communities in building long-term, emotionally rich relationships between the company and the consumer. In addition, in a period of decreasing mass advertising effectiveness, brands are forced to look for new touch points with their target audience, where fan communities play a critically important role.

The purpose of the article was to analyse brand fandoms as a tool for strategic management of consumer relationships and to identify interaction models that contribute to the formation of loyalty, participation and retention of customers in the long term.

Literature review

An analysis of modern scientific publications in the field of research on brand communities and their role in enhancing consumer loyalty and forming a shared identity indicates the growing attention of scientists to the phenomenon of fandoms as an important factor in the development of long-term consumer relationships.

Particular emphasis in current research is placed on the study of mechanisms for building loyalty, emotional attachment and active consumer engagement through the integration of fandoms into relationship marketing strategies. Thus, M. Mills *et al.* (2022) investigate how consumer identification in brand communities affects two dimensions of loyalty - public and private ones. The authors prove that participation in communities not only directly enhances both forms of loyalty, but also mediates the relationship between identification with the brand and consumer behaviour, which emphasises the role of fan communities as a mechanism for transforming emotional attachment into sustainable behavioural manifestations of brand support.

The work of M. Paruthi *et al.* (2023) focuses on the quality of the relationship between the brand and the consumer as well as the importance of identification with the community. The study confirms that active participation in fan communities directly enhances the brand love phenomenon, which, in turn, forms a positive WOM (Word of Mouth) and helps to spread recommendations. In turn, R. Rahman *et al.* (2021) propose a comprehensive model of the phenomenon of brand love, proving that the multi-component interaction of emotions, identity and satisfaction directly affects loyalty as well as consumer willingness to pay the premium price and actively recommend the brand to others (WOM).

Y. Jiang *et al.* (2023) analyse the role of participation in brand communities (using Samsung as an example) in the context of consumer propensity to early adoption of new products. The results show that active interaction and previous shopping experience stimulate faster adoption of novelties, which emphasises the function of fan communities as a catalyst for accelerating product cycles and increasing brand competitiveness.

Zh. Huangfu *et al.* (2022) emphasise the importance of the experience of participating in virtual brand communities. The authors distinguish three key types of experience - informational,

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entertaining and interactive ones - that arise in the process of consumer interaction in the community. The researchers prove that such a comprehensive experience enhances emotional identification with the brand and, as a result, enhances long-term loyalty.

Studies focusing on the potential of social networks as a space for the development of fan communities also deserve attention. In particular, H. R. Gaber *et al.* (2021) prove that Instagram fan pages contribute to the formation of deep emotional relationships with the brand through shared experiences and symbolic interactions. Similarly, M.-H. Chen and K.-M. Tsai (2020) in "An Empirical Study of Brand Fan Page Engagement Behaviours" empirically investigate the behaviour of participants in brand fan pages on social networks and analyse key motives that encourage consumers to interact. The study identifies three main groups of motives - utilitarian (seeking useful information or benefits), hedonistic (emotional pleasure, entertainment) and monetary (participation in raffles, bonuses) ones - and proves their impact on the level of engagement and willingness to maintain a brand in the long run. The results of their research confirm that active interaction in fan communities significantly enhances loyalty and stimulates brand advocacy among other consumers.

Finally, the publications by F. J. Martínez-López *et al.* (2021) confirm that active participation in online brand communities contributes to building trust, satisfaction and willingness to recommend a brand.

Thus, the analysis of scientific sources shows the high relevance of the study of the phenomenon of brand fandoms as a strategic tool of relationship marketing, as they form emotionally saturated, long-term relationships between the brand and the consumer, enhance loyalty, promote the spread of positive WOM and stimulate consumer activities in digital environment.

Results and discussion

Fandoms have long existed in the field of mass culture (music, cinema, gaming), but today brands use these mechanisms to deepen relationships with consumers. The study of this phenomenon is important for understanding the new paradigm of relationship marketing in the digital era.

Relationship marketing is aimed at creating long-term, mutually beneficial relationships between a company and its consumers. Unlike transactional marketing, it focuses on trust, loyalty, dialogue and complicity (Rosário & Casaca, 2023).

The concept of "fandom" (fan community) comes from the culture of media fans and refers to organised or spontaneous communities of consumers who not only actively use brand products, but also participate in joint rituals, events and content that form a common identity.

Brand fandom is a high level of consumer attachment to the brand, including emotional involvement, active participation in brand promotion and identification with its values (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001; Albert *et al.*, 2013). These communities share symbols, language, behavioural norms and can act as agents of influence.

According to the VML "Trends & Change to Watch in 2025" analytical report, 85% of people aged 14 to 44 identify themselves as fans of certain persons, phenomena or brands, and 65% of Gen Z and Millenials express willingness to join fan communities created around favourite brands (Telebeneva, 2025).

The concept of "brand fandoms" is closely intertwined with the concept of "brand love". Back in 2006, B. Carroll and A. Ahuvia (2006, p. 81) first substantiated the concept of brand love by defining it as a "degree of passionate emotional attachment of a satisfied consumer to a particular brand". Subsequently R. Batra *et al.* (2012, p. 6) proposed a more advanced interpretation, describing brand love as a "broad, long-term relationship between consumer and brand, including numerous interrelated cognitive, affective and behavioural components". According to many researchers, brand love is considered primarily as a form of long-term relationships rather than a short-term emotion (Paruthi *et al.*, 2023).

Modern scientific thought distinguishes brand love as a key construct in the system of building strong consumer relationships (Bairrada *et al.*, 2018; Islam & Rahman, 2017). It is based

mainly on the idea of interpersonal love, adapted to the interaction between a person and a brand. This concept draws increasing attention in marketing, since brands capable of generating emotional customer attachment usually achieve more sustainable competitive positions and long-term commercial success (Junaid *et al.*, 2020).

In parallel with the development of brand love theory in marketing practice, more and more attention is drawn to the phenomena of brand fandoms. Actually, brand fandoms can be considered as a social dimension of brand love, because they become an environment for the collective experience of love for the brand.

The relationship between these concepts is manifested in several aspects. First, fandoms are a catalyst and multiplier of brand love. Individual love for the brand is enhanced by social interaction within the community: the consumer receives a symbolic confirmation of his or her attachment through the exchange of experiences, fan content, shared consumption rituals (Alnawas & Altarifi, 2015). Second, fandoms form a space for symbolic consumption, where love for the brand becomes part of personal identity and even lifestyle. Participation in a fandom enhances the sense of belonging, which, in turn, deepens the consumer's emotional connection with the brand. Third, fandoms are an effective communication channel between the brand and the consumer. Unlike classic marketing tools, fan communities act as autonomous brand communications agents, creating an organic WOM and protecting the brand from reputational threats. From this point of view, fandoms are not only the result of brand love, but also the condition of its maintenance in the context of high competition and information overload of the consumer.

At the same time, it is important to emphasise that fandoms have their own dynamics and can both enhance and weaken love for the brand. Unsuccessful marketing decisions or community value violations can cause "betrayal" of the fan base, leading to the destruction of emotional connection and even a boycott of the brand.

So, it is possible to say that brand fandoms go beyond classic customer loyalty. They form a cultural community around the brand, where consumers become active participants in co-creation of content, meanings and values. It is advisable to include the following key characteristics of fandoms:
1) emotional identification with the brand;
2) proactive participation in communications (UGC, fan art, memes);
3) online and offline interaction within the community;
4) social validity due to belonging to the "chosen" group;
5) formation of brand cultural capital.

For a better understanding of the specifics of brand fandoms as a special form of relationship marketing, it is advisable to compare their key characteristics with the classic CRM approach, which is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparative characteristics of classic relationship marketing and brand fandoms

Parameter	Classic Relationship Marketing (CRM)	Brand fandoms
Type of relationship	Loyalty, pleasure, trust	Emotional attachment, enthusiasm, cultural identity
Activity level	Passive - poll, feedback	Active - UGC, memes, fan art, brand advocacy
Communication	Personalised proposals, CRM systems	Community-oriented, online communities, brand rooms
The role of the consumer	Consumer, recipient	Brand co-creator, one of the core of the community
Marketing target	Potential maintenance, recommendations	Creation of supporters who promote the brand voluntarily
Key metrics	LTV, NPS, repeat purchases	Engagement, advocacy, UGC volume, brand perception

Source: developed by the authors based on N. Stokburger-Sauer *et al.*, 2012; J. Pawle and P. Cooper, 2006; J. E. Escalas and J. R. Bettman, 2009; M. Paruthi *et al.*, 2023

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Brand fandoms differ significantly from the traditional CRM approach by a deeper level of emotional engagement and the active role of consumers as co-creators of the brand. While classic relationship marketing is focused on building loyalty and repeat sales through personalised communication, brand fandoms form communities where fans themselves act as ambassadors and actively produce content. This indicates a transformation of the brand-consumer relationship towards a more open, two-way and culturally coloured dialogue, which significantly enhances long-term attachment and organic brand promotion.

The effective use of brand fandoms is vividly illustrated by the practices of leading companies that demonstrate different models of interaction with consumer communities. For example, LEGO actively involves fans in the process of co-creating new products through the LEGO Ideas platform, which not only stimulates a sense of involvement, but also enhances the emotional connection of consumers with the brand at the level of co-authorship. Nike builds its own fandom with tools such as the Run Club, ambassador networks and limited collection releases, giving consumers a consistent sense of belonging to a special "brand lifestyle". In Samsung's case, a strategic partnership with the BTS music band has provided the brand with access to a huge army of K-pop fans who were mobilised through limited series of devices, themed events and powerful visual symbols.

McDonald's has implemented an original marketing move by opening a real restaurant called WcDonald's - this is how this brand often appears in parody scenes of Japanese anime and manga as an allusion to the popular fast food chain. Thus, the brand not only has creatively played with the memetic image, but also directly addressed the fan community of pop culture fans, demonstrating flexibility and willingness to integrate fan content into a real business strategy. The Heinz brand has shown another unconventional approach to working with fandoms, launching a whole line of products that goes far beyond the traditional food segment. In particular, Heinz released a collection of branded merch, a limited series of cosmetics and even interior paint in the signature ketchup shade. These products were created taking into account the brand's fan passion for Heinz's iconic ketchup status, transforming everyday goods into objects of emotional attachment and symbolic consumption that enhance the fan base's shared identity (Telebeneva, 2025).

At the same time, the Ukrainian Monobank demonstrates an example of fandom formation in the local market: thanks to the ironic style of communication, the popular image of the "Moni the cat" and active interaction with the audience in the Telegram channel, the bank has built a community of loyal customers who perceive themselves not only as users, but also as defenders of the brand in the digital environment.

Modern companies are increasingly realising that employees can be not only "internal" resources, but also active participants in the brand's fan communities, acting as real ambassadors. Thanks to this, brands are able to significantly enhance the authenticity of their communication, since it is "ordinary" employees that consumers trust more than official press releases or statements from top management, as evidenced by the results of 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer (n.d.).

Employee engagement in communication in fan communities can take various forms: from participation in public events, live broadcasts and speeches at conferences to the creation of behind-the-scenes content - "inside stories" that reveal the true face of the brand to the community. Employees can run their own blogs or social network pages, where they share personal stories about work, answer customer questions and thus enhance the effect of brand's openness and humanity.

According to the Ambassify study (Pisoni, 2019), 81% of Millennials willingly share information about their company on social networks, which gives brands a unique opportunity to expand their reach without spending on additional advertising. Companies that systematically develop employee advocacy actually integrate employees into their fan base, turning them into a powerful relationship marketing channel.

Microsoft, where the Employee Advocacy Programme operates, is a vivid example. Thanks to this, employees spread news about the company, share success stories and new projects on their

own social networks, which not only enhances the employer's brand, but also attracts new talent. Starbucks has gone further by creating an internal online platform to generate ideas and reward activity that encourages employees to participate in brand life and share this experience with customers. Google is also actively working to engage employees in corporate culture: with the help of gamification in training, the company motivates employees to interact, generate content and become "internal influencers" (Telebeneva, 2025).

Other companies are increasingly resorting to similar practices: for example, Zappos (Corporate educational platform…, n.d.) encourages employees to share behind-the-scenes stories and discuss innovations directly in open chats with customers. The Airbnb international technology company is actively developing the Employee Hosts programme (when employees themselves become hosts) and promoting "hospitality from within", emphasising the role of employees as brand ambassadors (Airbnb company website, n.d.).

Thus, the engagement of employees in brand fan communities is not only a modern trend, but also an effective element of relationship marketing that enhances trust, expands reach and creates a real "human face" of the brand, which is the key to the sustainable development of the fan base.

The study of the experience of interaction between brands and fan communities, which are used in modern relationship marketing, makes it possible to identify the main models of such interaction. These models differ in the level of community engagement, brand initiative, management flexibility and the level of value co-creation.

The Brand-Centric Model, which involves the creation by the company of official fan communities with clearly defined rules of interaction, centralised content management and communication control, is one of the most common ones (Dessart, 2017). The main goal of such a model is to enhance brand control and build consumer loyalty through the consistent rooting of brand values in the minds of community members.

The Starbucks Rewards Community platform, which unites consumers in a loyalty programme with referral mechanics, bonuses and discussion spaces, where each interaction enhances loyalty through incentives and shared brand values, is a vivid example of this model (Starbucks Rewards Community, n.d.).

Key features of this model include centralised brand control, active consumer participation within a clearly defined ecosystem and a high level of communication moderation (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). At the same time, it is the model that allows the brand to maintain message consistency, manage reputational risks and direct the collective activity of the fan community in the strategic direction desired by the company.

In modern marketing science, the Co-Creation Model is increasingly seen as an effective tool to deepen brand interaction with consumers and develop sustainable emotional relatiomships (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004; Ind *et al*., 2013). The essence of this model is to involve fans in active participation in the creation of products, content or communication campaigns, when their contribution is not only recognised by the company, but also integrated into official marketing activities (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2015). Unlike classic approaches to relationship marketing, where the consumer remains rather a recipient, the co-creation model involves an equal partnership and the transformation of the consumer into a full-fledged co-author of the brand story.

The Nike by You initiative, which allows consumers to personalise the design of sports shoes according to their own tastes and preferences, is a well-known example of the implementation of the co-creation model. This strategy not only stimulates fans' creativity, but also enhances the feeling of a unique connection with the brand (Nike by You Platform, n.d.).

LEGO - an international manufacturer of game constructors - is also one of the most vivid examples of successful integration of fan communities into a modern marketing strategy. Known for its innovation, LEGO actively develops partnerships with brand supporters, using their creativity and engagement as an important resource for competitive advantage. In the 2000s, the company faced serious challenges: reduction of sales and a gradual loss of popularity among the younger

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generation, which was increasingly focused on digital entertainment. In these conditions, there was a need to update approaches to communication with customers, intensify consumer engagement and overcome the barrier of passive product consumption (Antorini *et al.*, 2012).

The launch of the LEGO Ideas platform in 2008 (Antorini *et al.*, 2012), which was a vivid example of the implementation of the co-creation model, was the answer to this challenge. This platform allows fans of the brand to be co-creators of new products: users submit their own design ideas for constructors, which then go through a public voting stage among the community. If the project receives more than 10,000 votes, the company conducts an internal examination and, based on the results of approval, launches the idea into production, with the author's name being mandatory. Authors whose projects become commercial sets receive not only a royalty of 1% on profits, but also public recognition in the global community of LEGO fans (LEGO Ideas Official Platform, n.d.).

The Central Perk set inspired by the cult TV series "Friends" is a vivid example of the successful implementation of such a model (LEGO Ideas Official Platform, n.d.). The idea proposed by a fan received more than 10,000 votes, passed all stages of selection and was released into mass production in 2019, demonstrating commercial success for over two years and providing the author with not only financial rewards, but also global recognition in the community.

Thus, the launch of LEGO Ideas has turned passive customers into active participants in brand development, deepening their emotional attachment and loyalty. LEGO's experience convincingly proves that the co-creation model allows for the effective integration of fandoms into the company's business strategy, creating a sustainable basis for long-term relationships with consumers and generating innovative solutions in accordance with current market demands.

Therefore, key features of this model include a high level of emotional involvement of consumers, equal interaction and active integration of user-generated content in brand communication (Ind *et al.*, 2013; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2015). This enhances the sense of belonging to the community and creates the effect of brand "co-ownership", which makes the fan community a powerful agent for the voluntary brand promotion and development of its reputational capital.

The Brand Ambassador/Advocacy Model occupies a special place among modern relationship marketing strategies, as it is based on the voluntary activity of the most loyal and involved consumers - brand ambassadors. Within this model, the brand does not control all aspects of communication, but instead focuses on motivating and supporting its supporters (Keller, 2003).

The essence of the ambassador model is to create and maintain a circle of fans who formally or informally take on the role of brand promotion by sharing their own experiences, recommendations or reviews in social networks, blogs, thematic communities (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2014). These participants receive various non-monetary bonuses from the brand: early access to products, invitations to special events, public recognition or internal loyalty points (Hollebeek, 2024). It is important that authenticity and voluntariness are the key value of ambassadors, which significantly enhances trust in the brand among wider audiences.

The community of Apple fans, who form unofficial promotion channels - create YouTube review channels, thematic forums and blogs, is a vivid example. Although the company does not directly moderate this process, it stimulates the development of the image of "Apple evangelists" who share knowledge and experience (Keller, 2003). The Adidas Creators Club, where active members receive bonuses, exclusive content and invitations to events, which helps to build a community of brand advocates and expands the circle of supporters through the "word of mouth" mechanism, is another example (Hollebeek, 2024).

The peculiarity of this model is that promotion is carried out mainly through informal channels and at the level of personal trust, which allows brands to effectively enhance their reputation and influence without direct managerial control, while maintaining the authenticity of communication.

The Community-Led Model is based on the principles of decentralisation and autonomy of fan communities. Unlike classic brand-centric or ambassador approaches, this model involves minimal brand intervention in the internal processes of the community, focusing on the support, recognition and development of communities as independent subjects of cooperation (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001).

The essence of this model is that the brand acts as a facilitator and partner rather than a moderator or conductor of communication. The main role is to create a favourable environment, provide resources - for example, access to branded materials, merch or organisational support - without direct management control over fan community activities. This makes it possible to maintain the organic development of the community, enhancing the level of trust in both the community and the brand that supports it.

Samsung's collaboration with fans of BTS music band, when K-pop fans independently organise events, flash mobs and content campaigns, while the brand only supports partnerships with artists without interfering in the processes of the fan community itself, is a vivid example of such interaction (Kim & Hutt, 2021). This approach allows fans to feel their own significance and responsibility, and the brand - to receive the effect of organic "word of mouth" and emotionally involved advocates.

Key characteristics of community marketing include a decentralised structure, minimal management by the brand and an emphasis on self-branding, when community members themselves form the rules of interaction and brand perception. This model works effectively in the digital environment and social networks, where consumers tend not only to be passive users, but also to actively create cultural and symbolic meanings around the brand.

The Gamified Loyalty & Engagement Model is gaining increasing popularity among brands that seek not only to attract the audience, but also to maintain its activity and loyalty through the use of game mechanics. The essence of this model is to introduce various gamification elements - points, leaderboards, achievements, missions, or challenges - that create a sense of participation in a dynamic process for the consumer, motivate regular interaction, and stimulate a return to the community (Hamari *et al*., 2014).

The Duolingo platform, where a whole "Duo the Owl" fan culture has been built around the brand, is a classic example of the implementation of the gamified model. Users not only learn languages, but also compete in leaderboards, complete daily missions, receive trophies and badges for achievements that forms a strong fan base and encourages mutual sharing of experiences on social networks (Hamari, 2017).

The peculiarity of gamified interaction is that it creates the effect of "experience" for the consumer - the process of interaction is perceived as a game or adventure rather than as an ordinary purchase or subscription. Such dynamics contributes to the formation of an emotional connection with the brand, increases engagement indicators and forms a sustainable community of active participants. In the world dominated by digital technologies and mobile platforms, this approach is increasingly combined with elements of social interaction and UGC, which enhances the effect of community.

In modern practice of marketing communications, more and more brands are using not one well-defined model of interaction with fan communities, but are combining several approaches at the same time, forming flexible hybrid strategies. This combination makes it possible to simultaneously support the initiative of fans, stimulate the co-creation of content and products, as well as form a long-term emotional attachment to the brand. The activities of Monobank - the first fully mobile bank in Ukraine that since the beginning of its activities in 2017 has managed to form a powerful community of customers around itself, which actually functions as a fan base, is an illustrative example of such an approach.

By applying a mixed model of community marketing, Monobank organically combines the community-led and co-creation principles. On the one hand, the bank's fan community has been

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formed spontaneously, through unofficial Telegram chats, discussions on forums and the distribution of memes and stickers with the brand symbol - the Monobank cat. Such consumer activity demonstrates a high level of emotional involvement, especially among the young digital audience. On the other hand, the brand actively supports and develops co-creation: the bank team involves customers in beta testing of new products, regularly conducts surveys, analyses reviews and quickly implements feedback into its product line. By combining community-oriented and co-creation models, Monobank creates a unique brand experience where customers are not just consumers, but active agents of brand development.

Conclusions

The conducted study of the brand fandom phenomenon gives grounds to assert that fan communities are a modern tool for attracting a target audience, a strategic asset for the formation of long-term and sustainable relationships with consumers. The analysis of theoretical approaches and practical cases makes it possible to identify key characteristics of fandoms as a specific form of brand loyalty, based on emotional identification, co-creation of values and active brand advocacy.

It has been proven that brands implementing hybrid or purposeful models of interaction with their fan communities - from brand-centric platforms to community-oriented initiatives - are able to significantly enhance consumer engagement and transform them from passive customers into co-creators and brand ambassadors. This enhances emotional connection and economic stability of the business due to increased repeat purchases, organic promotion (word-of-mouth) and customers' willingness to pay a premium price.

The role of the digital environment, which provides the infrastructure for expanding and supporting fan communities, deserves special attention. The examples of LEGO Ideas, Nike Run Club, Monobank and other companies confirm that the integration of fans into the processes of product creation, communication and dissemination of brand symbols contributes to the formation of a high level of consumer autonomy and participation.

Thus, brand fandoms are an innovative element of modern relationship marketing, a catalyst for sustainable brand development in the conditions of digital economy and high competition. Prospects for further research in this area may be associated with an in-depth analysis of the motivational structure of fan community participants, gamification tools and the dynamics of fan community transformation in the context of globalisation.

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Conflict of interest

None.

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Олена Коломицева
Доктор економічних наук, професор
Черкаський державний технологічний університет
18006, бульв. Шевченка, 460, м. Черкаси, Україна
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6769-0590

Олексій Васильченко
Аспірант
Черкаський державний технологічний університет
18006, бульв. Шевченка, 460, м. Черкаси, Україна
https://orcid.org/0009-0007-5451-2174

Арман Ахтоян
Черкаський державний технологічний університет
18006, бульв. Шевченка, 460, м. Черкаси, Україна
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2928-7765

Фандоми брендів як каталізатор довгострокових споживчих відносин

Анотація. Актуальність дослідження обумовлена зростаючим значенням фан-спільнот у сучасному маркетингу, де традиційна лояльність клієнтів дедалі частіше трансформується у формат активної співучасті та адвокації бренду. Метою статті є дослідження феномена бренд-фандомів як інноваційного інструменту формування довгострокових відносин між споживачем і брендом. Методологічну основу дослідження становлять аналіз наукових джерел, порівняння існуючих моделей взаємодії брендів із фан-спільнотами, а також кейс-аналіз провідних компаній. У статті розкрито сутність феномена брендових фандомів у контексті створення та підтримки довгострокових

споживчих відносин і розглянуто приклади ефективного використання фандомів у зарубіжній та вітчизняній практиці. Виокремлено основні моделі взаємодії з фан-спільнотами, визначено прерогативи фандомів у підвищенні емоційної лояльності та брендової цінності. Визначено ключові характеристики фандомних спільнот та їх вплив на довгострокову лояльність, бренд-адвокацію та співтворення цінності. Здійснено порівняльну характеристику класичного маркетингу відносин і бренд-фандомів. У рамках дослідження було детально проаналізовано та систематизовано п'ять основних моделей взаємодії брендів із фан-спільнотами: Brand-Centric Model, Co-Creation Model, Ambassador/Advocacy Model, Community-Led Model та Gamified Loyalty & Engagement Model. Встановлено, що ефективність кожної з моделей залежить від цілей бренду, рівня контролю та очікуваного рівня залученості спільноти. Практика доводить доцільність використання як окремих, так і змішаних моделей для досягнення максимального рівня емоційної прив'язаності споживачів та посилення конкурентних переваг у динамічному ринковому середовищі. Отримані результати засвідчили, що фан-спільноти здатні виступати ефективним механізмом співтворення брендових цінностей, підвищення емоційної прив'язаності та стабілізації споживчої бази за рахунок гібридних моделей залучення. Практична цінність дослідження полягає у можливості адаптації напрацьованих моделей взаємодії для різних галузей бізнесу з метою підвищення конкурентоспроможності брендів та формування сталих маркетингових стратегій у цифрову епоху

Ключові слова: адвокація бренду, фан-спільноти, маркетинг відносин, емоційна лояльність, «brand love»

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