

Shared Value Creation and Marketing

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the paper is to test whether and to what extent the concept of CSV can be utilized in the marketing strategy of companies, and more precisely, whether and to what extent it can be used as a criterion for positioning the company in the market.

Methodology: The authors analysed the case of the Partnership for Health from the perspective of one partner, grocery retailer Biedronka. In addition, we have conducted consumer research among students to find out if consumers have a positive perception of products with a social mission.

Findings: The research findings indicate that, according to the respondents' perception, products with a social mission could comprise a basis for a positioning strategy for Biedronka, but for now, many customers do not even know that Biedronka offers such products in cooperation with its partners. The lack of a promotional campaign aimed at educating buyers had a negative impact on project awareness. It can even be stated that its potential wasn't exploited from a marketing viewpoint.

Research limitations/implications: The major limitation of the conducted research is the sampling procedure. The authors introduced their own scale for measuring the consumers' approach to products with social missions. This scale can also be used for implementation of similar projects.

Originality: In the subject literature there is a cognitive gap connected with the use of CSV concept in corporate marketing strategies. The authors determined how this concept could be used in marketing with special regard to the positioning strategy. Additionally a special scale was designed for measuring consumers' approaches to products with a social mission.

Keywords: shared value, marketing, positioning, retail

JEL: M31, M14

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| Introduction

Value plays a very important role in choices made by customers. When given the ability to choose among many competitive offers, buyers choose products or services with the biggest perceived value. According to P. Doyle, clients assess value by appraising the products' and services' ability to satisfy their needs (Doyle, 2003). An offer tailored to appeal to customers' needs increases both the company's sales opportunities and the probability of purchase recurrence, which directly generates higher profits.

Global analysis of the retail market indicates sales growth in brands that declare on their labels that they support sustainable development and actively promote efforts in the field of social responsibility (Nielsen, 2014). Consumers are willing to pay more for products and services offered by companies involved in exerting positive social and environmental impacts.

Customers growing interest in health issues, concerns about life conditions and quality improvement, and increasing life expectancy have in turn raised customers' expectations of retailers. Buyers increasingly assume they will be able to satisfy their needs comfortably, avoiding a waste of time or energy. They buy products that should among others meet criteria connected with sustainable growth.

Against the preceding background, the increasingly acute need to address societal issues within market activities can be observed. Consequently, organisations are pressured to incorporate the social environment as an operational variable. This approach is described and perceived as the foundation of corporate development via the concept of shared value (CSV) developed by M. Porter and M. Kramer (Porter and Kramer, 2011). CSV is the reformulation of a competitive strategy and business model in which a company creates a new value by improving its environmental condition. Originated from the general idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR), CSV more precisely considers how enterprises can efficiently secure their growth in a long-term perspective. The main condition for using this source of value will be distinguished by customers who choose products and services offered by companies that have implemented the shared value concept; however, this process seems to be currently in the initial stage.

In a global market one can observe various levels of involvement in the development of CSV initiatives. Nestle, Novartis, Dow Chemicals, Mars, Intel, GE and Vodafone are examples of corporations that are already successful in exploiting this source of value (Pfitzer et al., 2014), but the Polish market is still in its infancy. The initial stage of development in the case of the described phenomenon inspires a question: what is its real potential for creating value for enterprises in the market?

The aim of the paper is to test whether and to what extent the concept of CSV can be utilized in the marketing strategy of companies, and more precisely, how can it be used as a criterion for

positioning the company in the market. To achieve this goal, the authors analysed the case of the Partnership for Health, i.e. the coalition of four organisations responsible for the launch of the Milky Start brand, from the perspective of one partner – grocery retailer Biedronka, which distributes this brand. In addition, consumer research was conducted among students of Kozminski University to find out if the concept of products with a social mission (meeting the criterion of creating CSV by redefining products and markets) has a positive perception among consumers.

| The concept of shared value

The Concept of Shared Value (CSV) is rooted in the nearly 20-year-old idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Garriga and Mele, 2004); it involves, however, elements of a certain innovation. As the original concept, CSR is more general than CSV, because it is defined as “a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis” (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). The essence of CSV lies in taking on responsibility with reference to the societal sphere and the natural environment, first of all in the name of a moral duty.

Other researchers describe it as “the organisation’s commitment to minimising or eliminating any harmful effects and maximising the long-run beneficial impact on society” (Mohr et al., 2001). It has been proven in practice, however, that such commitment is likely to result in conflicts between business and societal goals that, consequently, expose both spheres to the effects of undesirable consequences, such as excessive costs (Orlitzky et al., 2003). The positive effect that is featured in the analysis of CSR’s importance consists in its contribution to the development of a company’s good image and the increase in its product differentiation (McWilliams and Siegel, 2011).

The variety of different business approaches to Social Responsibility, and particularly the work of Jed Emerson (Emerson, 2003) concerning the concept of “Blended Value” (as a conceptual framework for advancing a vision of value creation that is not based upon a bifurcated understanding of the nature of value “either/or”, but rather a unified, holistic understanding of value as “both/and,” “integrated and non-divisible”) can be perceived as a precursor for the work of Michael Porter and Mark Kramer. Similar considerations can be found in S.L. Hart’s and M.B. Milstein’s scientific paper “Creating sustainable value” (2003), in which the authors attempted to introduce the concept of sustainable development to the theory of creating value. The title concept was defined as policies and practical solutions that contribute to a more sustainable world while enhancing shareholder value. In this article the methods of value creation in sustainable enterprise were presented.

Porter and Kramer were the first to coin the term “strategic CSR” (2006), which they further developed into the idea of “Creating Shared Value” (2011). In the words of two Harvard professors, CSV promises to “*reinvent capitalism – and unleash a wave of innovation and growth*”.

Achieving financial benefits as a result of creating societal benefits is a common ground for CSV and CSR, but there is a significant difference between these two concepts. CSR is defined as “creating societal benefit regardless of costs, i.e. it involves distributing value that has been previously created, while CSV consists in development of new market opportunities and creation of new value” (Kramer, 2011). According to this idea, the emergence of shared value is the result of the increase in the enterprise’s ability to compete and to improve concurrently the quality of life in local communities existing in the company’s neighbourhood (Porter and Kramer, 2011). It is assumed that the economic and societal growth can be described with the use of category of value, understood as the relation of benefits to costs, which in business operations is measured by productivity, while in the social sphere it is expressed by the decrease of undernourishment, poverty, unemployment or pollution. CSV means the concurrent development of business and societal value and should not be attributed only to companies sharing common values with their stakeholders or, even more, with charitable activities. Instead, it ought to be closely related to forming a competitive strategy, whose key element is the search for new market opportunities in the field of needs, both individual (the predominant approach to business, so far) and social.

In order to distinguish between CSV and CSR, Porter and Kramer (2011, p. 16) developed a list of the main criteria that set the two concepts apart (see below). In case of the CSV approach, the initiatives undertaken should be long-term profit-oriented, while still retaining the benefits of the philanthropic approach. Ensuring that CSR initiatives can be economically sustainable in the long term, risks and uncertainties must be diminished, which greatly increases the incentive for firms to be socially responsible.

There are three major activities used for the concept’s implementation (Porter and Kramer, 2011):

1. Reconceiving products and markets, which consists of identifying and solving problems of local communities through products taking social needs into consideration (for example, in the field of health and nutrition);
2. Redefining productivity in the value chain through the implementation of organisational and technological solutions that allow the reduction of unfavourable environmental and societal influences;
3. Developing supportive industry clusters at company locations by undertaking initiatives that support entities engaged in the value chain or entities that have such potential.

These three methods for CSV implementation are not completely independent from each other. On the contrary, one process is often based on another (Trzaskowski, 2012). The launch of new products or services, or their redesign, usually requires changes in the supply chain. This has a direct impact on productivity in the value chain. The economic analysis of productivity can justify the sense of supporting clustering around the company.

Table 1 | Differences between CSV and CSR concept

	CSR	CSV
Value	Doing good	Economic and societal benefits relative to cost
Focus	Citizenship, philanthropy, sustainability	Joint company and community value creation
Nature of the activities	Discretionary or in response to external pressure	Integral to competing
Profits	Separate from profit maximization	Integral to profit maximization
Agenda	Is determined by external reporting and personal preferences	Is company specific and internally generated
Financing	Impact limited by corporate footprint and CSR budget	Realigns the entire company budget
Example	Fair trade purchasing	Transforming procurement to increase quality and yield

Source: Lapina, Borkus and Starineca (2012).

Among the essential conditions for successful CSV implementation there are as follows: thorough recognition of social needs, identifying available factors for increasing companies’ productivity, and cooperation between business entities and non-profit organisations.

The initiative can be assigned to a CSV, if the following conditions are met (Lapina, Borkus and Starineca, 2012):

- It can be profitable, if given enough time;
- It has a favourable social or environmental impact;
- It is not disconnected from the core business itself.

The CSV concept happens to be contested by academics because of simplifications involved. Trzaskowski believes that many aspects of CSV require further explanation, particularly the question of shared value measurement. Crane, Palazzo, Spence and Matten reproach the concept for its platitude and over-simplifications regarding the social role of enterprises, as well as the lack of originality and the naïveté about the challenges of business compliance, combined with companies ignoring the tension between social and economic goals (Crane, Palazzo, Spence and Matten, 2014). Furthermore, they claim that the academic world has accepted this theory in a way driven by the ‘Porter’s effect’, as his publications are widely and willingly quoted. In the analysis of 250 articles dealing with this concept, the authors found only 2 percent of papers presenting a critical approach to it. However, the lack of criticism cannot be considered the argument supporting the weakness of the theory itself. There are many successful companies that appreciate the usefulness of CSV, for example Becton Dickinson, Vodafone, Mars, and Coca-Cola (Pfitzer et al., 2013). Although the creators of the CSV idea were inspired by previous achievements, they were the first to elevate social goals to a strategic level and articulate a clear role for governments in responsible behaviour. According to authors of this text, this concept has a wide potential of utilisation in corporate marketing strategies. Strengths and weaknesses of the CSV concept are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 | Strengths and weaknesses of the CSV concept

Weaknesses	Strengths
CSV is unoriginal	CSV successfully appeals to practitioners and scholars
CSV ignores the tensions between social and economic goals	CSV elevates social goals to a strategic level
CSV is naive about the challenges of business compliance	CSV articulates a clear role for governments in responsible behaviour
CSV is based on a shallow conception of the corporation's role in society	CSV adds rigor to the concept of "conscious capitalism" and provides an umbrella construct for loosely connected concepts

Source: Crane, Palazzo, Spence and Matton (2014).

| CSV and marketing strategy

The possibility of using the concept of CSV in marketing strategy is conditioned by the way a company creates CSV and the marketing strategy they adopt. If the marketing strategy is defined as the selection of the target market (targeting), positioning and designing the marketing mix (Kotler, 2005; Krzyżanowska, 2011), using the CSV concept is possible in each of these elements (Table 3).

Table 3 | The use of the concept of CSV in marketing strategy

Methods of CSV creation	Elements of marketing strategy in which CSV can be used
Reconceiving products	Positioning, Product, Price
Reconceiving markets	Targeting, People
Redefining productivity	Price, Place, People
Building supportive industry clusters	Product, Place, Marketing Communication

Source: own work.

In this article, the authors focus on the use of CSV concept in the marketing strategy, using the example of positioning.

The idea of positioning often occurs in literature as the key element of marketing strategy (Krzyżanowska, 2011; Kotler, 2005), but its meaning is not homogeneous. In general, it can be interpreted in a narrow or wide way (Krzyżanowska and Tkaczyk, 2012). Narrow definitions are derived from the frequently quoted publication by Ries and Trout (1981), in which positioning distinguishes a product in consumers' minds and refers to the development of the marketing mix structure, with special consideration for the marketing communication. The extended meaning of positioning results from the assumption that it constitutes the basis of the marketing strategy, as it involves both the choice of the target market and the competitive edge that the company is seeking. The strategic meaning of positioning in this approach is meant to include the fact that

positioning determines paths for raising resources required to achieve the chosen strategy (Attia and Hooley, 2007).

The more comprehensive character of the wide approach (which takes into account not only the tactical meaning of positioning but also its strategic importance, including competitive conditions) makes it more applicable. The authors of this paper acknowledge that positioning serves the organisation's offer in taking the unique position – as compared to competitors' offers – in the buyers' minds, thanks to which they make a decision to purchase it.

From the practical viewpoint, positioning is conducted with the use of certain features of an offer that are defined as the positioning criteria. Just like the apprehension regarding the positioning concept, the issue of its criteria has been the subject of controversy (Blankson and Kalafatis, 2004). Numerous conceptions of positioning criteria can be found, but the authors of this paper focus on the empirically verified typology, presented in Table 4.

Table 4 | Typology of positioning criteria

Positioning criterion	Features of the offer
Top of the range	Upper class, Top of the range, Status, Prestigious, Posh
Service	Outstanding service, Personal attention, Focus on people, Friendly
Value for money	Durability, Warranty, Safety, Reliability
Attractiveness	Good aesthetics, Attractive, Cool, Elegant
Country of origin	Patriotism, Country of origin
Brand name	The name of the offering, Leaders in the market, Extra features, Choice, Wide range
Selectivity	Discriminatory, Non-selective, High principles

Source: Blankson and Kalafatis (2004).

Taking into account the concept of positioning and methods of creating shared value, the authors of this article noted that CSV could be used as a criterion for positioning within two categories: value for money or attractiveness, but mainly as a way to redefine the product (the first method of CSV). Value for money is a suitable category for products whose objective is to meet the basic social needs at a minimum cost. In contrast, products in the attractiveness category are those that add attractive elements by enriching the product with social mission, such as a reduced carbon footprint or improved education.

| The case of The Partnership for Health and Biedronka

The Partnership for Health (Partnerstwo dla Zdrowia) is a coalition of four entities, including two food manufacturers, Danone (dairy products) and Lubella (cereal products), retailer Biedronka

(discount grocery chain store) and the scientific institution the Institute for Mother and Child (IMiD). The partnership was established in 2006 as the initiative of Danone and IMiD in order to prevent undernourishment in young (early school grades) children and to propagate principles of proper nutrition. The first stage of cooperation between the participants was to examine Poles' dietary habits and develop a product meeting both economical availability standards and children's nutritional needs. The research findings showed that 57 percent of children aged 6–10 in Poland eat semolina served with milk at least three times a week; there is a common belief that such a meal has a favourable influence on health. This is why the first product developed by the coalition was Milky Start (Mleczny Start), semolina with milk, enriched with minerals and vitamins. The product ingredients comply with the 12 principles of proper nutrition, according to the Institute recommendations, and one serving provides up to 25 percent of the daily requirement for selected nutrients. The product's instant formula makes it easily accessible, as there are no problems with storage or preparation. The product goes in line with nutrition habits and is available for low-earners – one portion costs PLN 0.69. It is offered exclusively in the Biedronka chain, including all its stores, with no substantial marketing support. Since the launch of the Milky Start brand, 50 million portions have been sold, of which nearly one third were to low-income families (Danone, 2014).

The Milky Start product can be viewed as a particular example of the product reformulating initiative: it was developed to solve a social problem of undernourishment through the supply of a valuable, although very cheap, product. The unique nature of this undertaking is that the profits from product sales are reinvested in its development and similar initiatives, which means that commercial partners do not directly benefit from product sales. At the end of 2014, three products are sold in the Milky Start project: semolina with milk, sandwich and yogurt.

Biedronka is the brand owned (since 1995) by Jeronimo Martins Polska SA. The company concentrates its operations on retailing and is the leading player in discounters with the most nationwide coverage. Its stores are located in large-, medium- and small-sized cities and towns. In 2013 there were 2,415 stores operating under the Biedronka brand. Jeronimo Martins Polska SA does not engage in online retailing operations in Poland; instead, the company focuses on its brick-and-mortar business. In 2013, Jeronimo Martins Polska SA was the biggest retailing company in Poland with a 10.7 percent market share (percentage of retail value) and was the biggest discounter in 2013, possessing 80 percent of retail value share. The company proves to be the unrivaled leader due to its dynamic chain expansion across the country as well as the broad product assortment offered at low prices. Biedronka outlets offer a unified store design and fairly wide selection of grocery and non-grocery goods, mainly under private label. The stores are located in the neighbourhood of residence areas or workplaces, making Biedronka outlets increasingly popular for daily and weekly shopping. The Biedronka concept became popular among Polish customers, basically due to very attractive prices, a factor of high importance for price-sensitive Poles (Retailing in Poland, Euromonitor, 2014).

Unfortunately the company's value on the stock market in Lisbon fell in 2014 from nearly EUR 10 billion to EUR 5 billion. Recent statistics show that customers are starting to turn away from Biedronka. In 2011, Biedronka boasted a 20 percent increase in LFL (comparing sales in the same store year over year). In the first quarter of 2013 it grew by only 8.8 percent. In the first quarter of the current year a decline of 2.7 percent was reported. In the second quarter (including Easter sales, which are usually higher than average) the increase was symbolic: about 0.3 per cent. In the third quarter, there was again a decrease of 1.3 percent (Polakom znużyła się Biedronka, 2014).

After considering the above data it seems obvious that Biedronka's owners have to develop a new strategy for attracting customers. A question therefore arises: whether it would be a good positioning criterion for Biedronka to increase offerings of products with a social mission, meeting the above highlighted conditions for CSV initiative.

| Methodology

In order to verify the usefulness of the CSV concept as the positioning criterion, the authors of this paper developed their own scale for measuring consumers' attitudes toward products with a social mission. In addition, the perception of Biedronka's brand among respondents was examined, with the use of perception maps prepared on the basis of the semantic differential scale, in order to find out more about customers' perception of Biedronka's position versus its competitors.

A seven-point semantic differential scale was applied to four competing brands: Biedronka, Żabka, Tesco and Lidl. The three latter were selected as Biedronka's direct or substitutive competitors. The following pairs of antonyms were examined during the research: cheap/expensive, dishonest/honest, boring/interesting, conservative/open to changes, offering low-quality products/offering high-quality products, with future/without future, a wide range of products/limited range of products.

The sample was selected by convenient method. The questionnaire was prepared with the use of webankieta.pl online service and then the automatically-generated link was sent to 173 students of Kozminski University. Complete answers were received from 98 participants.

In the next stage, this information was researched with the use of the authors' scale comprising seven statements reflecting particular components of attitudes according to the ABC model (Table 5).

The accordance with the above statements was researched with the use of the 5-point Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha for the developed scale amounted to 0.75, which is enough to consider it reliable.

Table 5 | Scale of measuring attitudes of products with a social mission

The component of attitude	Statement
Affective	(1) Corporate social responsibility is nothing but image-oriented actions undertaken by companies. (reverse scale) (2) Products with a social mission, such as Milky Start, are a good idea. (3) I don't believe in the good intentions of companies manufacturing products with a social mission. (reverse scale)
Behavioural	(1) I am more willing to shop in stores whose offerings includes products with a social mission. (2) I am willing to buy products with a social mission.
Cognitive	(1) There should be more products with a social mission. (2) Products with a social mission should be more intensively promoted.

Source: own work.

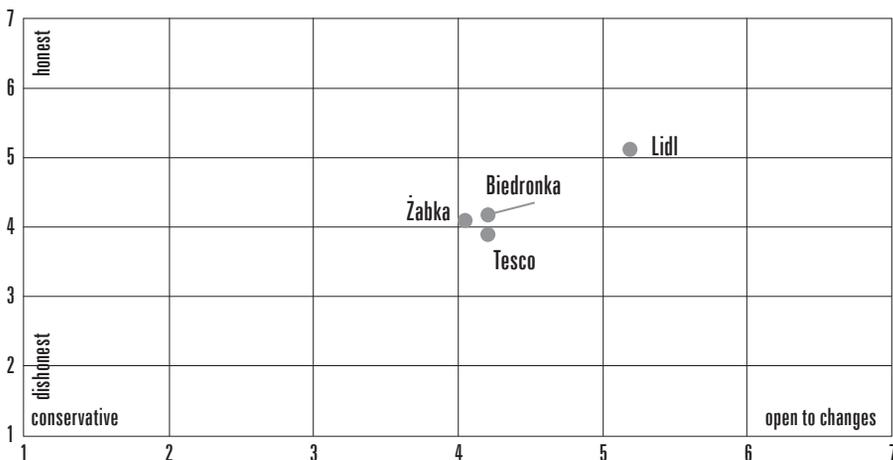
Respondents were also asked if they are familiar with the Milky Start idea and how much they like the Milky Start product. If respondents did not know the idea at all, it was presented to them in the form of a brief summary.

Findings

Respondents are most willing to do grocery shopping in Lidl (45 percent) and Biedronka (45 percent). Gender has no impact on respondents' choice of shopping location.

In order to recognize the Biedronka brand position in the customer minds, the brand perception maps were constructed in the context of Lidl, Żabka and Tesco brands, using the semantic differential scale. The perception map assessing the pair of variables “dishonest/honest” and “conservative/open to changes” is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1 | Perception map of selected grocery retail brands



Considering two variables, “dishonest/honest” and “conservative/open to changes,” it should be noted that analysed brands group more or less in the middle of the scale – except Lidl, which is clearly distinguished from others, being perceived by customers as more open to changes and more honest.

Additionally, the perception map was prepared on the basis of two other variables: “wide range of products/limited range of products” and “cheap/expensive” (Figure 2).

Figure 2 | Perception map of selected grocery retail brands



It can be concluded at this stage that Tesco and Lidl brands are perceived as relatively cheap with a moderate range of products. Biedronka is viewed as the cheapest brand, but with a limited product offer. In this ranking Żabka has the worst position, as customers believe it is both the most expensive and the most limited in terms of product range.

Taking the analysed variables into account, the Biedronka brand is evaluated as the brand “of the middle.” According to customers, Biedronka doesn’t differ too much from Żabka or Tesco. Admittedly it is perceived as the cheapest brand, which is consistent with its positioning, but the very limited offer is a drawback.

There is a clear difference between Lidl and other brands, as the first one is perceived unambiguously as the most honest, open to changes and relatively cheap brand, offering also quite a wide range of products as compared to competitors. Therefore, the Lidl brand is also viewed more favourably than the Biedronka brand in this respect.

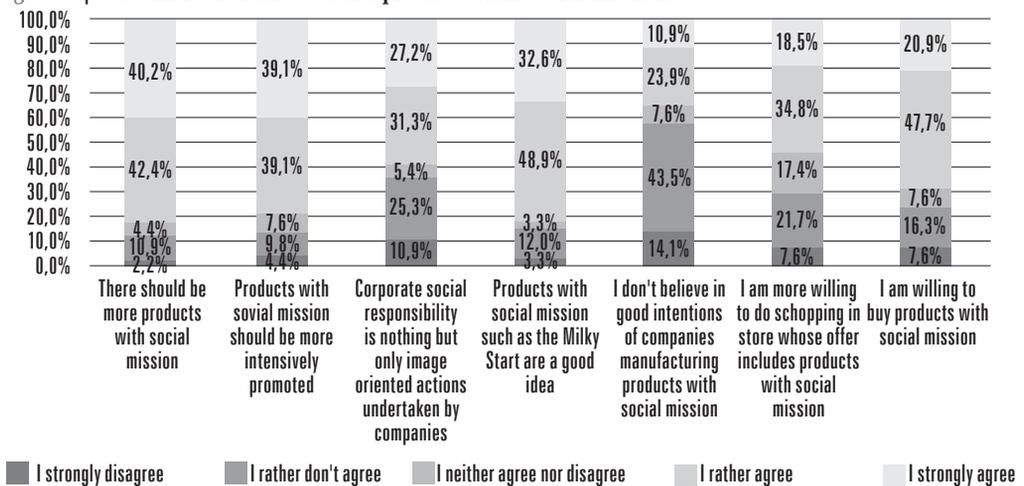
The analysis of Biedronka brand perception doesn’t produce optimistic conclusions, as despite undertaking actions to improve, the brand is not viewed as a distinguished one. Its image seems to be featureless, and apart from low prices, it doesn’t leave any significant associations in

customers' minds. This position can be dangerous in the long-term, which is already noticeable in the latest financial results.

In the next part of the research, the authors of this paper examined the awareness of the Milky Start brand offered by Biedronka stores, as well as customers' attitude toward products with a social mission. A majority (66 percent) of respondents haven't heard about Milky Start or any other product with social mission. Only about one-third (34 percent) of respondents are familiar with the Milky Start brand.

The results indicating customers' attitudes toward products with social mission are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3 | Customers' attitudes toward products with social mission



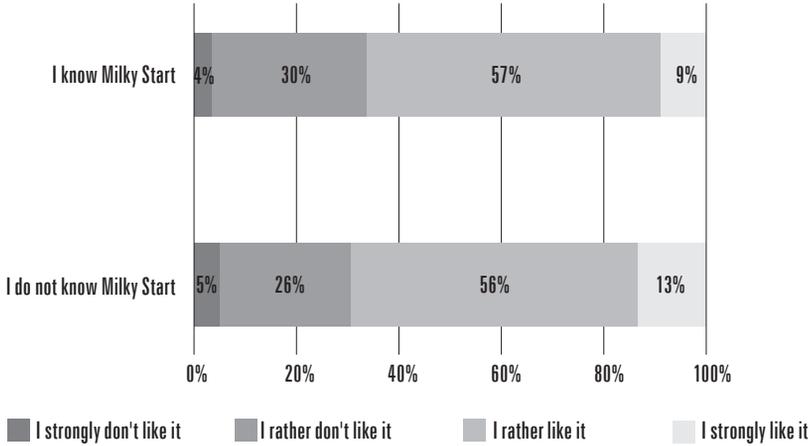
According to the absolute majority of respondents, there should be more products with a social mission, and they should be more intensively promoted. The respondents also consider products with a social mission to be a good idea. A majority of respondents (58 percent) believe in the good intentions of companies offering such goods; however, more than a half state that companies do it mainly in order to improve their image. An impressive 68 percent of respondents declare their willingness to buy products with a social mission, while 53 percent would be more eager to choose a store offering such products for their everyday shopping.

The comparison of answers given by people already familiar with Milky Start with answers of those unfamiliar with the brand leads to some interesting conclusions, as these two groups of answers differ significantly from each other (Figure 4).

The respondents who had no idea about Milky Start before the research liked the idea of products with a social mission more, but they were more critical about corporate social responsibility (CSR), admitting more willingly that CSR was nothing but image-oriented actions. Such people

were also more eager to declare they would buy products with social mission and would choose stores offering such products.

Figure 4 | Comparison of answers given by people familiar with Milky Start with answers of those unfamiliar with the brand



| Limitation and further research

The major limitation of the conducted research is connected with the sampling procedure. The convenient method used for sampling does not allow extrapolations of any general conclusions beyond the population of respondents. The method chosen by the authors was determined based on time and cost limitations. The students of Kozminski University, who usually pay for their education, represent a specific group, guided in their purchasing decisions by criteria other than price. Biedronka representatives mentioned that although the respondents were not a main target for the brand, Biedronka would like very much to attract the segment of higher-income customers. Therefore, the research findings showing that Biedronka was the shopping location most often chosen by Kozminski University students were received very favourably.

An interesting research issue for the future, apart from expanding the respondents' group, is to learn more about the influence of psychographic features related to lifestyle and personality on the acceptance of products with a social mission. The research conducted by the authors of this paper can be treated as the initial testing of the device, i.e., the scale of acceptance for such products.

| Conclusion

According to the research findings, the respondents' perception of products with a social mission could comprise a basis for a positioning strategy for Biedronka, but for the time being,

many customers do not even know that Biedronka offers such products in cooperation with its partners. Without a promotional campaign aimed at educating buyers, the project awareness is limited. It can be even stated that its potential wasn't exploited from a marketing viewpoint.

The results of the year-over-year analysis conducted by Nielsen in March 2014 indicate an average annual sales increase of 2 percent for products with sustainability claims on the packaging and a lift of 5 percent for products that promoted sustainability actions through marketing programmes. A review of 14 other brands without sustainability claims or marketing show a sales increase of only 1 percent (Nielsen, 2014).

As was proven by the authors of this paper on the basis of the literature analysis and the conducted research, consumers are increasingly noticing products and services offered by companies involved in exerting positive social and environmental impacts.

To create the social and business value, the following elements are required: social purpose, defined need, measurement, right innovation structure and co-creation (Pfitzer et al., 2013). However, in order to position this idea successfully, effective marketing communication is also indispensable.

It is not enough to present customers with a value that is both important to them and socially useful, it must also be properly communicated.

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