

## CHAPTER 30.

### PROMOTION OF SERBIAN NATIONAL IMAGE IN THE LIGHT OF EU ACCESSION<sup>1</sup>

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#### *Abstract:*

*The main objective of this chapter is to affirm the importance of the branding process and creating a positive image of Serbia which, for many years, was faced with negative image. As a result of this fact, Serbia occupied a low position on the world map of country brand values, as presented by the leading research agencies dealing with the topics of country branding area. As a candidate for EU membership, Serbia has got potential access to the market of more than 370 million consumers, where the positive image can be a significant competitive advantage in ruthless unfair market competition. Improvement of the national image is primarily dependent on an effective promotional campaign designed to influence adequately on the attitudes of the target market. Hence, the emphasis in this work has been placed on several crucial areas, such as: development of effective communication of the national image of Serbia, the use of marketing communications mix to promote the country image and the use of integrated marketing communications for the purpose of creating the country's image.*

**Key word:** *National image, Promotion channels, Integrated marketing communications, EU accession*

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## INTRODUCTION

Obtaining of the candidate status for EU membership is very significant for Serbia from both, economic and political aspect, and in terms of improving country's image, because it is an evidence of Serbia's readiness to join the European mainstream and accept European position belonging to it as a true European country. In that context the EU membership itself, besides the political integration, opens various possibilities for economic progress in the direction of security for foreign investors, increasing of number of jobs, further development of small and medium enterprises, agriculture, and what is perhaps more important, building of a competitive position so that Serbia can be with other EU member countries. Integration into the EU means that Serbia is ready to confront and correct the negative associations (wars, violence, etc.) that for many years were tied to Serbia, but also it means that Serbia is ready to create a new image, and that is an image of European Serbia. Being part of the EU means membership in the system of democracy, respect for human rights and values, respect for law and market regulations. To market a product in the EU means to have access to the market of over 370 million consumers. And, if any of the consumers wishes to buy a product labelled as "Made in Serbia", the country must make great efforts in assuring the product quality and in products recognition, and above all, the great efforts must be invested in the country's national image so that it awakens positive associations.

According to Simon Anholt (2009) the change of country's image is not a quick or easy job. Such an image is being formed, sometimes, for centuries, it is being shaped by wars, religion, diplomacy, sports victories or defeats, famous "sons and daughters" of the nation and finally, by the products exported by that country. A national brand is like the proverbial super tanker which takes five miles to change course and eight miles to stop. This statement requires that "the countries and nations today must become aware of their demanding environment and clearly define who they are and what they want, what they can offer to the world, why would they be important to someone and why should they be respected. They just have to find a way to attract attention of others and tell them a story about themselves in a way that will create among them admirers, buyers, lobbyists, friends, or at least have an impact on reducing the number of enemies"(Skoko, 2009, p. 10).

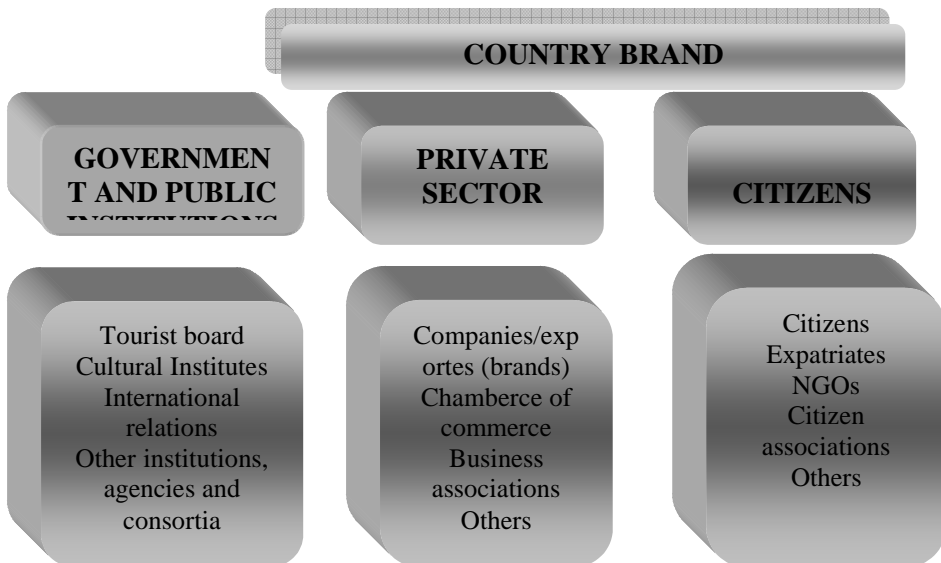
In this regard, and in order to create a positive national image, Serbia should use the concept of integrated marketing communication but also a systematic approach which means to create an organization on the country level that would manage the complete project of improving the Serbian national image through consistent promotional activities. In order to let the country effectively fight for

her place on the global scene, it must be identified by something – its values, people, products, natural resources, aspirations, culture, history, athletes, lifestyle or a combination of the above stated, making its national image.

## NATIONAL IDENTITY AS BASIS FOR THE COUNTRY'S IMAGE AND BRANDING

Country's reputation is a key item in its economic, social, political and cultural development. Olin's (2005) says that nation that appears as the most attractive is being rewarded while others are suffering. Han (1989) found that there were two specific ways in which consumers used the country's image (in the form of halos and as a summary). When consumers do not know the product, they use the country's image to perform a conclusion about the product quality, when the actual quality is unknown (halo). The halo affects on consumers attitude towards the brand indirectly, through beliefs arising from the conclusions. As consumers become more aware of country's product, the country's image is used to sum up their beliefs about the product characteristics; then the image directly affects their attitude towards brands (abstract).

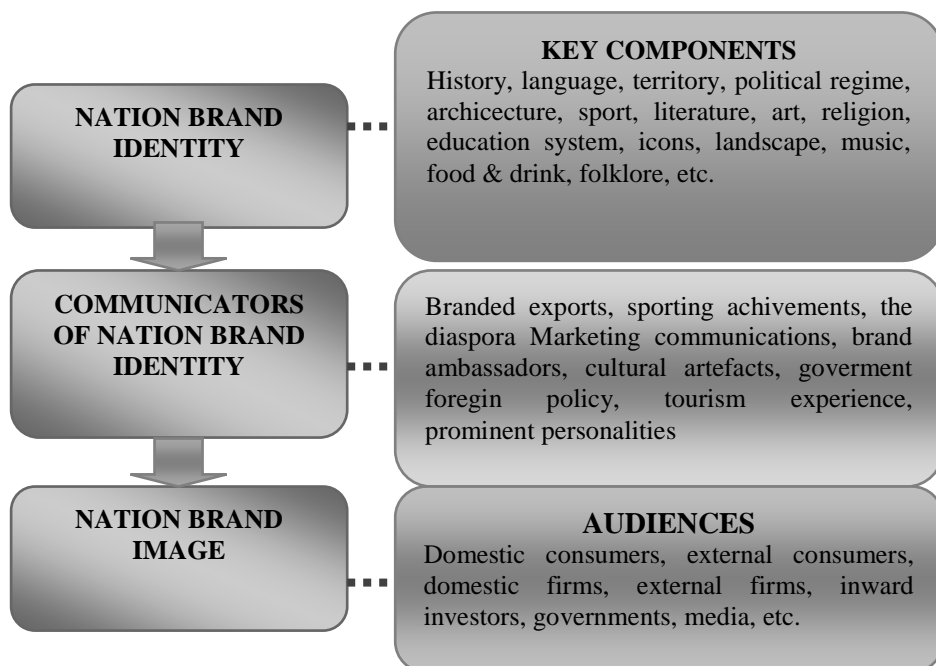
*Figure 1: Different stakeholders in country branding*



Dinnie (2008) says that nation branding is the unique multi/dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all\* of its target audiences". Country's brand is a way in which

country is primarily seen by its citizens, and the way the country is seen by the people of the world. Theme brand has to interest country and professional circles because those who manage the country's branding can isolate all the good (positive) things and raise them, but also all those that don't contribute to a good image – not to stand (the truth well told).

*Figure 2: The image of a country – Key Components (Dinie, 2008, p.143)*



"Identity is created on the basis of the own values and facts" (Skoko, 2009, p.15), and national identity is defined as feeling of belonging to a particular group, which was acquired during the socialization process (Šiber, 1998). National identity consists of other identities. Huntington (2004, p.110), states that different people differently evaluate national identities in comparison with their other identities, and relative importance and intensity of the national identity of any people has changed over time. "The national brand is a multidimensional brand, and may include value categories such as: high quality of products and services, business dynamics, creativity, ingenuity, entrepreneurship, educated and skilled population, excellent facilities for rest, recreation and entertainment, high quality infrastructure and healthy natural environment"<sup>4</sup>. In the process of creating or

<sup>4</sup>[www.brandmagazin.com/index.php?Itemid=69&id=2299&option=com\\_content&task=view](http://www.brandmagazin.com/index.php?Itemid=69&id=2299&option=com_content&task=view) (Accessed on May 25, 2012).

strengthening of the national brand it is indispensable to work hard on identifying and on continuous selection of strong brands which can be the holders of the national brand and its identity. This means that countries must be aware of how they are perceived abroad and that is why it's important to invest in research of the perception of their national characteristics (features), products and services and other important elements of the brand. National characteristics and values that are selected to form a national brand identity must be rooted in the reality.

## POSITIONING OF SERBIA'S IMAGE IN GLOBAL PUBLIC

Country's position, in the global public, is a subject of interest of a large number of agencies. In the next segment, we shall present some of the most renowned researches on the positioning of Serbia by the most prominent companies in this area: East West Comms - Country Branding Global Index 20, GfK Roper (The Nation Brand Index) and the Country Brand Index (CBI).

**East West Comms - Country Branding Global Index 200** - East West Comms Group is engaged in providing communication and branding services which publishes *Country Branding Global Index 200 (CBI)* ranking list by Perception Metrics system, which compares on a quarterly basis, the positive and negative news in the world's leading media about countries. In its analysis, East West uses positive (assistance, freedom, support, victory, etc.) and negative words and messages (violence, murder, separatism, etc.) that are linguistically and conceptually related to the country observed. From the analysis of these positive and negative messages, the score (rank) is being determined and compared to other countries covered by the study. East West Nation Brand Perception Index shows that of total 200 ranked countries (of which 192 are the members of the UN), Serbia took the 159<sup>th</sup> place in 2010, while at the end of 2011, Serbia was on the encouraging, 169<sup>th</sup> place.

*Table 1: Serbia Ranking in the period from 2008 to 2011.*

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011
Serbia	170	181	159	169

*Source: East West Nation Brand Perception Index 2011*

During the year of 2011, in the international media Serbia was mentioned, either positively or negatively, 22.489 times. What is encouraging is the fact that in the last two years there is a slight improvement of the position of Serbia, compared to 2009 when Serbia was the worst ranked, on the 181<sup>st</sup> place. The fact is that the

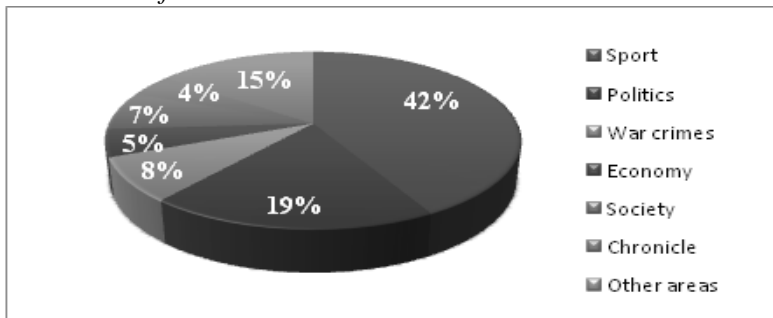
communication messages tones are very slowly, but nevertheless, transforming from neutral to positive, what is partly due to the nomination of Serbia for EU candidate status.

**GfK Roper (The Nation Brand Index)** - German company GfK Roper Public Affairs & Media, is one of the largest market research organizations in the world. Simon Anholt (one of the leading theorists in the field of branding a nation/country), in cooperation with GfK group, developed the concept of Nation Brand Index, and constructed a unified, rational and comprehensive system for measuring the national brand reputation. *The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index* measures the power and quality of each country's "brand image" by combining the following six dimensions: Export, Management, Culture and Heritage, Reputation of the Population, Tourism and Investments and Immigrations. GfK Index for year 2011 made an analysis of 50 countries based on these six dimensions. Serbia was not on this list.

**Country Brand Index (CBI)** - *Country Brand Index (CBI)* is an organization created by *Future Brand* based on the perceptions of 3.000 international business and tourist travellers from nine countries (U.S.A, Great Britain, China, Australia, Japan, Brazil, UAE, Germany and Russia). The Country Brand Index features a variety of ratings and rankings including: Authenticity, History, Art & Culture, Resort & Lodging Options, Ease of Travel, Safety, Accommodation, Rest & Relaxation, Natural Beauty, Beaches, Nightlife, Shopping, Fine Dining, Entertainment, Outdoor Activities & Sports, Hospitality, Standard of Living, Attraction for business, Easiest to Do Business In, Quality Products and Services, Advanced Technologies, Environment and Desire to Visit and/or Visit Again Determined Country. From the beginning of publishing the Country Brand Index (2005), Future Brand organization didn't include Serbia in their study.

Except the secondary data analysis of the above stated agencies, the authors analysed the positioning of Serbia in the foreign (primarily European) printed media, and in major global TV networks. During the year 2011, they analysed the newspaper articles by the influential European printed media, was made (El Pais, El Mundo, Guardian, Times, Independent, Le Monde, Die Presse, Deutsche Welle), as well as the sites of the global media services (BBC, CNN, Euronews, TV5, CBS, Al - Jazeera, Sky News and RTL). According to author's research, the character of articles reporting on Serbia during 2011 in the above mentioned media was: 72% neutral, 22% positive, 6% negative. Most of the articles are related to sports (42%), where dominated tennis victories by Novak Djokovic during the 2011, then politics (19%), and less on war crimes (8%), society (7%), economy (5%) and chronicle (4%). Articles relating to other subject areas do not exceed the cumulative prevalence of 15% (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Structure of articles on thematic areas in the chosen media in 2011.



If we summarize the above given results, we can conclude that relatively negative image follows Serbia on the world global scene, but it's important to say that there is a tendency of slight improvement. This negative connotation is the consequence of recent wars and bombing of Serbia in 1999, but also because of negative campaign in the world media during the 1990-ies. However, it is the result of several decades of disregarding promotional and communicational strategies that Serbia didn't enforced in her fight for a place on the world scene. In this way we lost a great media battle, but not the war.

In the world of global communications, the country's image consists of two dimensions: *Unintentional* image which is the result of information about the country (media) and *Intentional* image which is a result of promotion of the country, with implementation of pre-designed marketing strategy. Unintentional image of Serbia was created during the 1990-ies, because of the war in former Yugoslavia, and a very bad image of Serbia was presented. Yet, today, we have instruments that can help Serbia to significantly improve the national image that represents the experience or perception the world has about it, primarily through promotional campaign based on integrated marketing communications.

### PROMOTION OF SERBIA THROUGH THE IMC CONCEPT

Under the influence of the increasing fragmentation of world markets and media, reinforcing the global competitive struggle, technological advances in the field of telecommunications, there is a significant shift in profiling the communication mix, in terms of adopting the concept of integrated marketing communications (IMC), which should represent the basis of communication strategy of Serbian brand with target audiences in the EU (Domazet, 2012). In this sense, the idea of the authors of this chapter is that the Serbian government should create an organization on a country level that would manage the complete project of improving the Serbian national image.

IMC concept focuses creativity, synergy, integration and communication. Integration is a combination of separate parts into a unified whole. One outcome of integration is synergy, which is expressed as "2+2 = 5", and means that the integrated whole is greater than the sum of its parts. When communication messages reinforce each other, synergy is being created but when messages are different, they can be confusing and the emergence of synergy is absent. In the case of positioning the national image of Serbia, the implementation of IMC should be coordinated by a national agency, in order to ensure that the message about Serbia is clear, consistent, convincing and competitive.

Analysed by the applied communication campaign, this means that stands of Serbian exhibitors at international trade fairs should be branded according to the adopted visual identity of the Serbian brand. It is also important that the site of the national brand of Serbia is interactive and that incorporates all the important information essential for improving the communication aspect of the target audiences (domestic and foreign). This means that all the representatives of Serbia abroad should be aware of the IMC strategy and should coordinate their appearances with it (this is especially important for economic diplomats, who are supposed to take a significant role in the positioning of the national brand of Serbia).

There are different models that explain the impact of communication to the target public, and most models are given in Table 2.

*Table 2: Models of communication activity on the target public (Kotler, Keller, 2006, p.245).*

<b>Models</b>				
<b>Stages</b>	<b>AIDA Model<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Hierarchy-of-Effects Model<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Innovation-Adoption Model<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>Communications Model<sup>d</sup></b>
<b>Cognitive Stage</b>	Attention ↓	Awareness ↓ Knowledge ↓	Awareness ↓	Exposure ↓ Reception ↓ Cognitive response ↓
<b>Affective Stage</b>	Interest ↓ Desire ↓	Liking ↓ Preference ↓ Conviction ↓	Interest ↓ Evaluation ↓	Attitude ↓ Intention ↓
<b>Behavior Stage</b>	Action	Purchase	Trial ↓ Adoption	Behavior



The primary objective of integrating marketing communication is to increase communication efficiency and better positioning of the national image of Serbia. Efficiency is achieved by reducing the number of lost messages and by increasing their impact on the recipient. In this process, approach that should be used is targeted approach, which involves adjusting the message to the recipient. Consistency ensures that among the messages, send by the country of Serbia, there is no collision and in that way, it is necessary to precisely define goals and processes of communication. Communication objectives can be linked to: creating the image of Serbia and its brands, building communication preferences of competitive advantage of Serbian brands, reducing the perceived investment risk and uncertainty of investments in Serbia by providing useful information and advices.

### **STAGES IN DEVELOPMENT OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF NATIONAL IMAGE OF SERBIA**

Basic steps in developing effective communication of the national image of Serbia should be:

1. Situation analysis and identification of the target audience (target public);
2. Determination of communication objectives, which may be awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, persuasion and acceptance;
3. Creating a general strategy of integrated marketing communications,
4. Determination of the budget for the implementation of communication strategies,
5. Designing communication, i.e. creating messages in terms of content, structure, format, etc.
6. Choosing the communication channels, which primarily should be massive, with the creation of an interactive map in accordance with the visual identity of the national brand of Serbia,
7. Deciding on the media mix, and/or creating a communication media plan respectively;
8. Managing and coordinating the communications;
9. Measuring the results of the campaign and comparing the results achieved with defined objectives.

*Situation analysis* is based on the SWOT analysis that focuses maximizing internal advantages and opportunities offered by the Serbian market, and minimize the weaknesses of the national brand, with an attempt to avoid the dangers lurking on targeted market. After that, it is necessary to identify the target auditorium, which represents the key influence on communicator's decisions about what to say, how to say, when to say and whom to say. Target auditorium

can also be profiled by targeted market segments. **Determination of communication objectives** follows the decision - making process of potential market segments on the perception of Serbia as a country, on the choice of Serbia as a real investment and tourist destination, or on the purchase of Serbian brands.

**Communication designing** depends on strategic decisions regarding the national brand of Serbia: what to say (message strategy) how to say (creative strategy) and who should say (message source). The message usually has to be short, clear; it has to cause attention, and has to be emotionally attractive in a way to develop the positive effect of the target public and the desire to make a concrete step. All these message elements must be consistent with previously defined and adopted visual identity of national brand of Serbia. Particularly the importance of communication messages should be emphasized in a way of conciseness, clarity and focusing on a particular segment we want to position ourselves, following the rule "less is more" i.e. minimalism and clarity of communication messages with the maximum result. **The choice of communication channels** is the most important stage in the communication development, because it is necessary to determine the budget for a given communication activity. For example, such is communication of our diplomats, where they would be particularly focused on one segment, they are so-called economic diplomats, who are the most invited that in their personal contact with foreign representatives they significantly influence the positioning of national brand of Serbia. Within a promotional campaign it is necessary to make a choice between different types of media for transmission of messages, but also between different alternatives within each of them. In practice, these activities are subsumed under the term *media planning*. It is a process that involves making of decisions in a series of communications for transferring messages to the target audience. During this process, the quantitative and qualitative information about the media are being considered. Quantitative information includes, for example for TV - the cost per second of broadcasting, rating, efficiency - cost effectiveness; for the print media these are: the price for publishing (and size of advertising space), readership, circulation, sales, etc. Qualitative information means analysis of environment, media image, press quality, advertisements position, responses to advertising messages, etc. It is also necessary to provide answers to the questions where, when and how often to advertise.

Geography (Where?) includes answers to the questions about where a message will be broadcast (at national, regional, global level). Seasonality (When?) is expressed when it comes to promotion of specific cultural events (Guca and Exit), including visits to many cultural and historical sights, and suggests that the timing, when to implement communication campaigns, is also important. In the end, there must be an answer to the question - *how often to advertise?* In this it is

necessary to define the optimal levels of the following parameters: range, coverage (*Reach*), frequency of broadcasting (*Frequency*), and their combinations (*Effective reach / frequency*). For creating the optimal media mix, i.e. for choosing adequate channels of communication, it is necessary to know the characteristics of the basic forms of promotion: those of advertising, public relations, sponsorship, event marketing, direct and internet marketing.

**Advertising** - is a paid method of mass idea promotion of ideas, products or services, via various media by a company. Also, advertising is effective for creating awareness about the brand, ubiquitous and has the possibility of repetition, television is a particularly powerful medium that has its full effect in the combination with print media; it is *expressive* because it provides the mainstreaming of the company and its products through creative use of the press, sounds and colours; *impersonal*, because it lacks flexibility, it means it is a monologue in front of the auditorium, not a dialogue with it.

**Public relations (PR)** – it is a form of communication that involves the presentation of the brand so that information about it are placed through media announcements and press conferences and media time or space is not paid directly. The main characteristics are: high degree of credibility; the advertisement is not paid, exceptionally suitable as an instrument of communication in case of a limited budget, it attracts more targeted market, extremely effective in unpredicted circumstances when it is necessary to react quickly (in unpredicted situations it represents a powerful instrument of crisis management). The main disadvantage of PR, as a communication channel, is the loss of control over the published material, because the press release may or may not be published, but its content can be changed in accordance with the editorial policy of media.

**Sponsorship** - activities and programs sponsored, in the case of a national brand, by the country Serbia with the aim of creating interaction between the brand “Serbia” and the target public. Sponsorship is very useful for building the brand and achieving publicity; positive for society to show that the company cares about the local community and society in general. This type of communication is more and more popular due to the fragmentation of traditional media.

**Event marketing, meaning promotion of the national brand image through presentations at international fairs, exhibitions and the permanent training of entrepreneurs** - these activities contribute to the positive development of the national brand and the effects are long term. A significant number of Serbian businessmen attended many international fairs organized by the Tourist Organization of Serbia and the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, where they

exchanged business experience with foreign colleagues. This kind of activity should be particularly supported, including specific courses and seminars that would educate our entrepreneurs, with the aim of appropriate presentation of Serbia in the world, but also development of export markets.

***Direct marketing*** – represents a direct communication with existing or potential market targets where communication can be personalized; there is an instantaneous measurability of results, long-lasting relationship can be built through periodic contacts, activities are less visible to competitors. But on the other hand, bad targeted direct marketing activities cause negative effects on consumers. It means that special attention should be paid to the exponential development of social networks (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.), which, as a direct communication medium, are becoming an unavoidable factor in every promotional campaign. The channels of communication should include *word of mouth* marketing, in fact, the testimonies of foreign guests who visited Serbia and carry an extremely positive experience about the country. This type of *online branding* offers nations the opportunity to establish themselves as niche brands in a way that would not be possible through using more conventional branding techniques (Dinnie, 2008, p. 246). A special segment of the interactive direct marketing campaigns should be paid to the presence and managing the mix of communication in social networks: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, My Space, etc.

## EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA

From the point of view of time, the efficiency of communication can be assessed before, during and after the campaign. The aim of the *pre-testing* is to, before the marketing campaign begins, assess the effectiveness of one or more elements of messages and/or their composition in order to select the optimum message. Rationality of pre-tests is reflected in the fact that it is better previously, with lower costs, to identify the inadequacy of certain messages (ads), than to conclude that by the end of the campaign. Research before the campaign is usually conducted on a small number of typical or potential targets, while for the brand that is being promoted different research techniques are being used (Ewing, 2009, p.104). Such techniques are: focus-groups, techniques of unfinished sentences, tests of association, portfolio tests, etc.

*In progress of marketing campaign*, researches are implemented in the course of duration of the promotional programs, within a short time after the end of the show, using the telephone on the basis of a questionnaire containing a small number of precisely defined, short and clear questions, to obtain certain information from respondents who were exposed to a particular advertisement.

*Researches after the campaign* are focused on measuring the effectiveness of ad campaign, in whole or rarely, on measuring the contribution of individual elements of message that should enable the realization of the advertisers' objectives. Depending on the objectives, researches can be directed to collect various information related to: identifying the degree of brand picture improvement (image), which is measured by difference in attitudes and opinions of the members of the target group on advertising products "after" and "before" the advertising campaign etc.; identifying the degree of the target group exposure, which is measured by the number of the target group members (propaganda targets) who observed the message; identifying the degree of retention (memory) messages, which is measured by the number of the target group members who remember the messages, etc.

For gathering the information who indicates the effectiveness of commercial advertising, different tests are being used, such as: *tests of recognition/identification*, memory tests and etc. *Tests of recognition* are performed in a way that certain ads are shown to the respondents and then, they are asked to state the one they recognize. However, based on that, nothing can be concluded about the attitudes of respondents (whether they are positive, neutral or negative) related to the message itself and the overall effects of the given campaign. *Memory tests* can be carried out without any help (no reminding) and with help (using recall). In this case, respondents are helped to remember advertising messages in a way that, along with the question put to him/her, certain brands were stated to them. Empirical studies show that from the set of those who like the advertising message, the inclination toward a particular brand is increased with very large number of respondents.

American newspaper publishers (Magazine Publishers of America) along with the American Association of Analysts Marketing Management (Marketing Management Analytics - MMA), quantified the effects of advertising on total sales, as well as the impact of advertising in print media in relation to advertising in other media. In this comprehensive study 186 brands were analysed, in 13 different product categories, in the period since 1994 to 2000 and results were presented not individually but aggregated.<sup>5</sup> Brands that were included in the analysis represent more than 9 billion of total investment in marketing, and/or more than \$ 3 billion investment in advertising, and more than 500 million dollars invested in advertising through print media<sup>6</sup>.

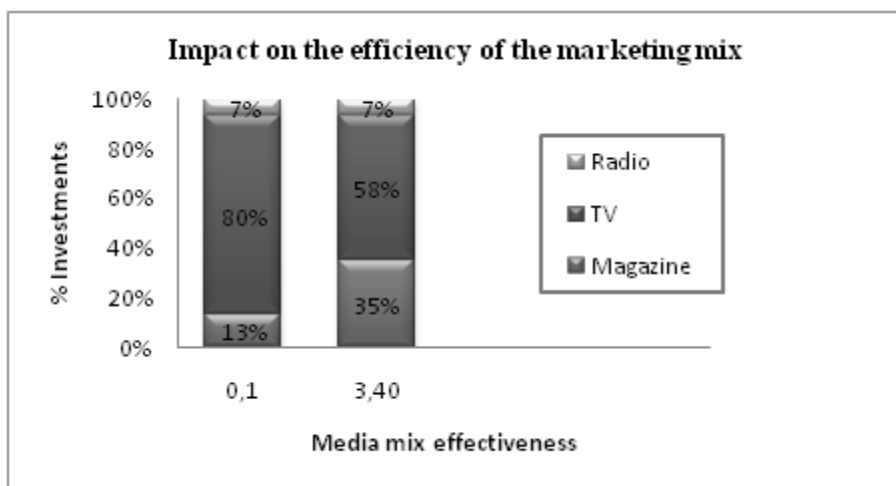
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<sup>5</sup> [www.pppmarketing.net/cgi-bin/wms.pl/726](http://www.pppmarketing.net/cgi-bin/wms.pl/726), (Accessed on May 10, 2012.)

<sup>6</sup> The value of the advertising market for the past 17 years (1995-2012) had a growth of over 100%, so we should be aware that an investment of 3 billion € in 1995th today, we can equate with an investment of at least 6 billion €.

The analysis did not include internet advertising because at the time of making the analysis there were not enough data about this media. MMA conducted a quantitative analysis and the results showed that, the brands spending a higher percentage of their marketing budget for advertising have higher yield of their total investment in marketing. Respectively, increased investment in media enhances the overall effectiveness of marketing efforts. The effectiveness of marketing efforts has been measured by the degree of brand recognition products.

*Figure 4: Marketing mix influence of two different brands on media effectiveness*



The study results clearly demonstrated that the power of advertising through the effective combination of television, radio and print media significantly improves recognition of the brand which the communication mix was created for. Also the capability of print media was pointed out that, within the existing media mix, to improve the efficiency of marketing investment return (Figure 4.). The conclusion of the MMA research study clearly shows that advertising, presented as a combination of television and print media, enhances the efficiency of the total marketing mix, leading to the conclusion that the efficacy of certain forms of marketing communication depends on the degree of their integration into a coherent system that ensures consistent communication transmitting messages to their clients. These results of empirical researches clearly point out to a trend that should be followed, provided the goal is creating an effective promotional campaign to improve the national image of Serbia.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prerequisite for the development of effective communications, aimed at improving the country's image, is a promotional campaign focused on the most significant potential that can be placed in the most optimal way to target audiences in the EU. In the case of Serbia, during the creation and implementation of communications, it is necessary always to be aware of the desired image of Serbia that will reflect their basic strengths and advantages. Communication strategies should be a part of the global marketing strategy, where it is necessary to define: basic values with which Serbia wants to position itself to the target market of EU, as well as the target markets through targeted segments and toward them create a strategy of positioning the image.

Development of effective communications of the image of Serbia should be done in two phases:

1. Construction of infrastructure (institutional framework), visual identity and interactive site of the national brand of Serbia.
2. Creation and implementation of communication strategies of the national image of Serbia, with the focus on integrated marketing communications.

In the first stage it is necessary to build infrastructure which will be responsible for implementation of the communication strategies through the following steps:

- Creating an organization on national level which would manage and coordinate all the communications related to the national brand of Serbia.
- Creating visual identity of the national brand of Serbia, especially the selection of the dominant colours (it is recommended to use colours of the national flag), logo and slogan under which all communication messages will be launched.
- Creation of a representative, interactive site which will have a priority position in all international search engines, when the word "Serbia" is typed. This site should be present in all media formats used by Serbia in communication with the EU target audiences and must be in full compliance with the adopted visual identity of the Serbian national brand. The site should be a specific guide through Serbia, which will, among all necessary information about Serbia, incorporate the most important TOS and TOR materials.

After finalization of this phase, development and implementation of the communication strategies of the national brand of Serbia can start with the focus on integrated marketing communications. This phase involves the following steps: situation analysis and identification of the target audience; determination of communication objectives, creating a general strategy of integrated marketing

communications; determination of budget for the implementation of the communication strategy, communication designing, choosing of communication channels, deciding on the media mix and/or creation of the media plan, managing and coordinating the communications; measuring of the campaign results and comparing the achieved results with the defined goals.

Author's recommendations for effective communications with the aim of enhancing the national image of Serbia are:

- The basic motive of promotional campaign, i.e. the communication campaign slogan should be short, clear with a focus on the core values on which Serbia is being promoted. Some of the more successful communication slogans were: "Portugal - The Beauty of Simplicity", "Incredible India", "Malaysia - Truly Asia", "Cyprus - Island for All Seasons", "Croatia - The Mediterranean as it once was," "Romania - Explore the Carpathian Garden ", "100% Pure New Zealand", "Sicily - Everything else is in the shade", "Switzerland - Get Natural", "Spain - Everything Under The Sun", "Greece - Live your myth in Greece". For communication with the target audiences the most effective is a combination of advertising channels (through the national and global TV networks and the most popular print media), publicity in interaction with the central site of the national brand of Serbia.

- The campaign should include the world famous Serbs (athletes, scientists, directors, actors), who would support the campaign and would appear in promotional spots about Serbia, broadcast on the most popular national channels and global TV networks. Spots should be broadcast on the global television networks in Europe, America and Asia (CNN, Euronews, BBC, CNBC, RT, TV5MONDE, RAI, TVE, CCTV, etc.), where media selection would depend on the target market.

- This advertising campaign should include global sports TV network (Eurosport, ESPN), but also TV channels oriented on traveling (Travel TV). For communication with the domestic public it is better to use: national TV, high circulation print media, billboards with the support of intensive PR.

- On any media format that is used as type of communication (both with a foreign, as well as with a local target public) the site, as a central part of the communication campaign of the national image of Serbia, should be seen.

- The promotional campaign should be partly directed towards the promotion of Belgrade, as an historical landmark, but also as a regional centre of culture, entertainment and sport. The communication campaigns should be intensified



with participation of Serbian businessmen at the selected international trade fairs and exhibitions, especially in the countries that are targeted as a primary target foreign public.

- Communication channels should also include the *word of mouth* marketing, i.e. the testimonies of foreign guests who visited Serbia and carry an extremely positive experience about the country. This type of promotion has a significant role in increasing the positive recognition of each country's national brand. A special interactive segment of the direct marketing campaign should be intended to the presence and managing the communication mix on social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

- It is necessary to create in specialized media which follow music festivals in the world a special segment of the communication campaign which will be engaged in the promotion of Exit and Guca, as the most important music festivals in this part of Europe,. It is also necessary to use the synergy effect of acknowledgment of International edition of CNN, CNN World Fiesta which, in June 2011, included Exit among the nine best festivals in the world.

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