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PROMOTION OF PRO-ECOLOGICAL INITIATIVES IN POLISH CITIES. CASE STUDY OF MIKOŁÓW MUNICIPALITY

PROMOCJA INICJATYW PRO-EKOLOGICZNYCH W POLSKICH MIASTACH. STUDIUM PRZYPADKU GMINY MIKOŁÓW

ПРОДВИЖЕНИЕ ПРО-ЭКОЛОГИЧЕСКИХ ИНИЦИАТИВ В ПОЛЬСКИХ ГОРОДАХ. ПРИМЕР ГМИНЫ МИКОЛУВ

Abstract

The article deals with the promotion of pro-ecological initiatives addressed to residents of the municipality. It presents a concept of promotion, its basic instruments and conditions in relation to conducting this activity by Local Government Units. An attempt was made to refer these issues to the ecological aspects of the functioning of municipalities. Conducted considerations in this area are illustrated by examples of promotional activities in the field of ecology in the Mikołów municipality.

Keywords: *pro-ecological initiative, ecology, municipality, promotion.*

Streszczenie


Artykuł porusza kwestie promocji inicjatyw pro-ekologicznych adresowanych do mieszkańców gminy miejskiej. Przybliżono w nim pojęcie promocji, jej podstawowe instrumenty i uwarunkowania w odniesieniu do prowadzenia tej działalności przez Jednostki Samorządu Terytorialnego. Dokonano próby odniesienia tych zagadnień do aspektów ekologicznych funkcjonowania gmin. Prowadzone rozważania w tym zakresie, zilustrowano przykładami działań promocyjnych w dziedzinie ekologii w gminie Mikołów.

Słowa kluczowe: *inicjatywa proekologiczna, ekologia, gmina, promocja.*

Аннотация

Статья посвящена продвижению про-экологических инициатив, адресованных жителям муниципальной общины. В нем представлена концепция продвижения, ее основные инструменты и условия, связанные с управлением этой деятельностью Подразделениями Местного Самоуправления. Была предпринята попытка отнести эти вопросы к экологическим аспектам функционирования гмин

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(муниципалитетов). Рассуждения на эту тему иллюстрируются примерами рекламной деятельности в области экологии в Миколувской гмине (муниципалитете).

Ключевые слова: про-экологическая инициатива, экология, гмина (муниципалитет), продвижение.

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Statement of the problem in general outlook and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks.

The main problem of this article is the determination of effective marketing activities that can be implemented by municipalities to promote pro-ecological activities. These pro-ecological activities are very important these days because of climate changes. An additional factor affecting the promotion of pro-ecological activities in municipalities is limited financial resources for this purpose. From the marketing point of view, it is important to resolve the issue of the effectiveness and efficiency of this type of activities in conjunction with appropriately selected promotion mix tools. This

article is an attempt to make this kind of analysis. Article indicates potential mix marketing elements related to the promotion, which can be used to publicize pro-ecological initiatives. In the further part of article, reference is made to the practical use of these tools by Polish cities. Additionally, based on a case study of the Mikołów municipality, an attempt was made to confirm if pro-ecological activities in Mikołów are the same as in Polish cities or if they differ from the general trends in this aspect.

Analysis of latest research where the solution of the problem was initiated.

The promotion can be defined as a set of means by which the city communicates with the market, provides information about its activities, products or services, which is why it is also a very important determinant of the city's identity strategy (Stanowicka-Traczyk, 2007, p.28).


Promotion is the most visible element of marketing activities in the local government unit, it is caused by fact that promotion has the widest range of tools compared to other municipal marketing mix instruments, as well due to the visual and tangible nature of the means used. Promotion in territorial marketing is defined as all activities related to

communication of a territorial unit with the environment, including information about the region, convincing about its attractiveness and encouraging the acquisition or consumption of territorial subproducts (Florek, 2006).

In practice, in the territorial unit promotion is skillful and efficient information to clients, recipients (local population, investors, tourists and families from outside the city) of the territorial product and activities of local authorities (Pilarczyk, Bernaciuk 2005).

Products in the municipal promotional activities are defined by A. Szromnik as specific utility groups, offered in a paid

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mode, partially paid or unpaid (on various financial and legal conditions) to interested groups of clients. A. Szromnik lists a few basic types of products, including a tourist product (tourist establishments, hotels, gastronomy, environmental values, monuments, traditions, atmosphere), housing product (flats, houses, private, cooperative social and municipal plots), an educational and cultural product (education, culture), calling them subproducts. Their sum is called synthetic territorial product (Szromnik, 1997).

The prerequisite for running a promotional activity by municipalities is the information needs that appear on both sides of the market exchange: supply and demand. Residents or people staying in a municipality temporarily need information to be aware of the existence of various products, initiatives as well as public services. This information allows them to make a reasonable choice whether to participate in a specific program implemented on the territory of the municipality. During the participation of residents in specific actions or projects promoted by the municipality, information for municipal authorities is generated. Promotional activities provide them with municipal authorities with information about the needs and preferences of residents, the degree of their satisfaction. (Chrząścik, 2012, p. 148).

Taking into account the above regularities, the promotion objectives of municipalities are primarily:

- information about the existence of a region (including raising awareness among potential buyers); because of the promotion information is provided to current and potential buyers, which helps breaking the barrier of ignorance about the region's location and available regional resources, attractions, etc.),

- convincing about the advantages of the region by pointing to the benefits achieved in the region related to the purchase of the offer and by comparing with the offers of other regions (analogous offers), emphasizing the advantages,

- encouraging (convincing) to buy or consume regional products (by providing potential purchasers with an appropriate set of rational and emotional decision-making criteria, enabling individual purchase variants to be assessed and selecting the right one for the needs and preferences) - the intended effect is in this case, the calling of specific actions and behaviors of buyers, as well as their consolidation, leading to loyalty to the offer of the region,

- shaping the identity and consolidating the image of the region (Florek, 2006, p. 144)

On the other hand, the Supreme Audit Office as the key objectives of the promotion of Local Government Units indicates:

- increasing the attractiveness of the city (powiat, region) for residents, tourists and investors,

- shaping the image of the city,

- increase in the tourist or health rank of the city (municipality, powiat, region),

- strengthening the position of the city (municipality) as a significant economic center in the region (subregion) or region - at home and abroad,

-integration of residents,

-promotion of ecological values and agritourism,

- raising external capital and mobilizing local capital,

- care of the environment,

- cultivating tradition, care for cultural heritage (Promotional activities of local government units. Information on the results of the NIK 2011 audit, p.13)

Ecological activities in municipalities may include many areas:

- increasing the number and space of green areas;

- introducing environmentally friendly urban transport solutions;
- improvement of air quality by reducing low emissions;
- increasing energy efficiency in public institutions;
- using renewable energy sources;
- introducing eco-innovation;
- education of the local community in the area of ecology;
- effective implementation of ecological policy principles (Herbuś, 2017, p.87-88).

Regardless of what ecological initiatives concern, all of them deserve proper promotion.

Issues related to the protection of the natural environment take more and more attention in the problems resolved at the global, national and local level. Climate change and increased pollution have resulted in enterprises and the public sector taking actions that are designed to stop the ongoing negative changes and improve the existing situation, in particular in areas where they have a direct impact. The undertaken initiatives are at the same time a part of the information and education campaign addressed to clients, state citizens, local communities and to all entities whose daily activities have an impact on the environment. Local authorities and non-governmental organizations operating in municipalities have a large role in such activities, because they are the closest to the residents. Cooperation between the municipality and other private and public institutions and organizations increases the chances for effective shaping of environmental awareness in the local community. It also contributes to the promotion of projects implemented by these entities and may encourage residents to take initiatives to improve the environment. (Adamczyk, Wązkiewicz, 2013, p. 7-8)

After exceeding the basic level of satisfaction of life needs, residents of municipalities more and more often are willing to pay for features of the product unrelated to its usefulness. These features are the brand, appearance, and customer service. The prestige caused by the possession of a specific good is also becoming more and more important for customers. If it is possible to achieve a state when the essential element determining the prestige in the local community it will be the implementation of tasks of sustainable development (ecological use of used goods) and environment protection (not only minimization of impact, but active actions for environmental protection), the effect will be greater and longer lasting than administrative actions and penalties.

The confirmation of mentioned regularities is a creation through educational actions, media, etc. trend for ecological heating, cars, household appliances or in a wider range - organic farming, agritourism, etc. The Expenses for this purpose, which do not bring visible savings or profits, can greatly emphasize the prestige of the owner of this kind of goods. Strengthening the trend for ecology means that not only involved in and aware of the goals of eco-development people will invest in it, but also those people for whom ecological aspects are indifferent. However, each conscious action in this direction is associated with the assimilation of new information and inevitably, often despite the will of the interested, changes their worldview. In the local aspect, the sum of minor changes in the behavior of residents may result in significant savings for the city budget and state finances by increasing the resilience of the environment (to negative natural and anthropogenic factors), limiting minor inconveniences and negative impacts, now often decisive for the state of the environment in the municipality (low

emission, waste and sewage, noise, etc.) (Kozakiewicz, 2006, p. 74). Therefore, municipality should promote pro-ecological projects and initiatives focused on changing their attitudes towards the natural environment and promoting sustainable development.

Using the conducted research and analysis in Poland, it can be stated that local government units use different channels and communication tools. Communication policy of municipalities can be divided into two main areas, inward communication - all communication activities addressed to residents (articles in the local press, advertising in the city, radio and television interviews, press conferences), and outside - within this framework in the sphere of promotion, messages intended for potential investors have a significant quantitative advantage (presence at trade fairs, advertising in business magazines, a website). Promotion on the Internet gives local government units the fastest opportunity to reach a large number of recipients of information. The promotion on the website can be considered according to the division into promotional activities carried out on one's own website (in this case the city's website) and promotion carried out on the WWW beyond one's own website.

Promotion on websites is often used local government units promotion tool. However, municipalities' websites are primarily used to implement the promotional information function. (Dziękański, 2012, pp. 35-36).

An important instrument used in the process of communication of territorial units with the environment is public relations. This element of marketing communication is available even for municipalities with a limited budget. It allows achieving goals related to creating the image desired by the commune in the environment, shaping civic attitudes among the local community related to ecology and

environmental protection, and involving residents in specific projects and initiatives that lead to increasing their ecological awareness. Information aspect is equally important, local government authorities use public relations instruments to provide information to residents about both activities undertaken in the municipality and about the municipality itself - including the state of the natural environment in and around the municipality. Achieving these goals is possible through, printed materials of an informative nature (leaflets, posters, folders), organization of events in the municipality and involvement in sponsoring activities.

It is worth noting that the municipalities in their promotional activities often organize specific events and ventures specific to them or the region. It can be festivals, competitions, exhibitions, contests, reviews, shows, conferences, etc. In addition, municipalities organize events based on the past, developed traditions and culture, which main purpose is to sustain and develop values and traditions existing in the community. These events are an effective way to activate the local community and build strong community. These events can be used by municipalities to increase ecological awareness of their residents.

The confirmation of the activity in the sphere of ecology and environmental protection for local government units are competitions organized by various organizations, often under the patronage or with the participation of national institutions (Ministry of the Environment, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management or Environmental Protection Inspector). Informing about successes achieved and obtained titles and prizes is an important element of creating the image in the community and confirming the advantages

of municipalities, as well as a form of encouraging further efforts for residents and entities engaging in the municipality in the awarded area of activity.

An example can be the Leader of Green Energy competition. Its organizer was the Foundation for the Promotion of Polish Municipalities, and the entire project aimed at rewarding projects supporting the development of renewable energy, which were implemented in the municipality by local

authorities and organizational units reporting to the office. An important aspect assessed in the competition was the cooperation of institutions and organizations from all three socio-economic sectors (public, private and social). This cooperation was to encourage local governments "to partner pro-ecological activity for the use of renewable energy sources (eko-gminy.pl 2013 website)

Aims of paper. Methods.

Currently, local development activities should take into account the principles related to marketing management, which are particularly important in the conditions of the free market economy. It adopts the territorial marketing convention, understood as "market activities of representatives of regions aimed at attracting both investors and potential residents" (Girard 1997, pp. 70-71). Therefore, local authorities that are responsible for the socio-economic development of their region must conduct conscious promotional activities.

This article deals with the promotion of pro-ecological initiatives addressed to residents of the municipality. It describes the concept of promotion, its basic instruments and factors affecting the implementation of this activity by Local Government Units. It attempts to refer these issues to the environmental aspects of the functioning of municipalities. Conducted considerations in this area are illustrated by examples of promotional activities in the field of ecology in Mikołów.

The theoretical aim of the article is investigation about the effectiveness and efficiency of using individual elements of the mix promotion to inform residents about such initiatives undertaken by municipal authorities.

The cognitive aim of this article is to show which promotion tools Mikołów is using in practice and whether the promotional instruments used by it in the field of ecological initiatives are consistent with the general tendencies of Polish cities in the promotion of ecology and sustainable development.

This article also has a utilitarian purpose related to the approximation of the best practices, which have succeed in the Polish reality and which are worth propagating more widely.

The article uses the case study method based of promotional activities carried out in the city of Mikołów related to the promotion of pro-ecological activities and literature research related to the promotion of ecology in Polish cities.

Exposition of main material of research with complete substantiation of obtained scientific results. Discussion.

The problem of the City Mikołów is air pollution in autumn and winter. It results from the low emissions from cars, dust and gases emitted from domestic heating furnaces or coal-fired boilers. The city wants to change this situation. In the municipal office, residents can get a surcharge to replace an outdated source of home heating for a greener one. The mayor Mikołow commissioned the development of an application for obtaining additional funds for this purpose. An appropriate application for this purpose has been directed to the Provincial Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management in Katowice. This fund granted a subsidy to the municipality of Mikołów to limit the low emission. Mikołów inhabitants may receive PLN 5,000 in subsidies for the new generation furnace. However, human consciousness plays the most important role in the fight against low emissions. More and more residents of the city are aware that they should not burn everything in furnaces. The promotion of the proper way of the heating was joined by the Mikołów city guards. Instructional videos about how to heat in an ecological way can be viewed on the website of the municipal guard in Mikołów. Activities modeled on this action are carried out by many municipalities in Poland (the website Teraz środowisko 2017).

As part of the promotion of pro-ecological activities, on 25/04/2017, at the 750th anniversary square in Mikołów, the tree planting action began. By this action Mikołów commemorated the upcoming 800th anniversary of the city. Over the next five years, 40,000 trees will be planted in Mikołów. This is a symbolic number that is supposed to reflect the approximate number

of Mikołów residents. The new municipal authorities from the beginning of their cadency wanted Mikołów to become a beautiful green place. They want the greenery in the city to be as much as possible, especially at a time when mass cutting down trees takes place in many cities.

According to the plan of a special team set up at the City Hall, new trees will grow in districts of Mikołów. Among the plantings, peculiar cherries, pears, ornamental apple varieties, column elm trees and beeches will dominate (website: naszemiasto.pl 2017).). Because of the Tree Day, trees are planted around the world, and thus teaches ecology. Ecological associations, forest inspectorates and schools join this action. On this occasion, on 10.10.2017, Stanisław Piechula, the mayor of Mikołów, photographed himself with an old laptop and published the photo on Facebook. In the picture the mayor in one of the hands is holding a laptop, and in the other one, the tree seedling. The action promoted in this way meant that electronic equipment and home appliances, which has long been used by residents of Mikołów, could be exchanged for a tree. These devices could be mobile phones, clocks, computer keyboards and mice, hair dryers, etc. For the larger equipment in the form of a refrigerator, washing machine or dishwasher, residents could receive two trees (Głowacka, 2017).

In March 2018, in Mikołów, the 'Sharing connect' project began. Within it, a point where people can bring and give away unnecessary books, clothes, food that has not expired, was established. A person bringing a thing can also take what he needs from the point. Everything is done for free. The point operates from 7.30-19. The

analyzed initiative is based on the Western European concept of food sharing. It has been slightly expanded. The point of this initiative is that the food, which sometimes happens to be bought in excess and which we do not eat before the period of usefulness, did not waste. One has to just take it to a designated point. From where, someone who will serve it can take it for free. Mikołów authorities emphasize that the action is primarily about public awareness and paying attention to the problem of food waste. Mikołów authorities also want to promote good social attitudes and simple human kindness and empathy in this way.

The poster promoting the described campaign contains information about what food products can be brought. These are food products that have exceeded the date of minimum durability, but have not exceeded the expiration dates, products sealed or placed in containers, self made products like cakes, soups, but also cheese, yoghurts, cottage cheese. Raw, spoiled and out-of-date food and alcohol should not be brought. (Wojs, 2018). In addition, this campaign was promoted by an information video posted on Twitter and You Tube.

The Silesian Botanical Garden, located in one Mikołów district, is involved in promoting pro-ecological attitudes of residents of Mikołów. The discussed garden is one of the largest and most modern facilities of this type in Silesia. Its basic task is to protect the biological diversity of the region, educational activities aimed at various age groups and shaping pro-ecological attitudes in society. The garden is also a great place for recreation and relax. Scientific activities are also carried out there. Established in 2003 as the Association of Associations of Silesia, Mikołów city, Mikołów powiat, Racibórz and Radzionków cities, Silesian University and PAN. The official decision

on the establishment of the Garden was issued by the Minister of the Environment in 2006.


The mission of the Silesian Botanical Garden (covering an area of about 80 hectares) are activities aimed at the protection and preservation of the biological diversity of Silesia and the temperate climate zone. The next tasks are: ecological education, natural and health education as well as scientific activity.

The Silesian Botanical Garden is divided into five laboratories: Laboratory of Ornamental Plants Collection, Laboratory of Scientific and Conservation Collections, Laboratory of Habitat Collections, Laboratory of Ecological and Natural Education, Laboratory of Studies on Adaptive Systems.

An important part of the activities of the Silesian Botanical Garden is educational activity, addressed to various age groups (children, young people, teachers, educators, etc.). There are, among others, thematic workshops, school of natural science experiment, seminars. Silesian Botanical Garden also organizes and promotes such events as the Frog Holiday, Birds' Day, Earth Day, Bee's Day, Lightning Day, etc. (Silesian Botanical Garden in Mikołów).

Because of the fact that the Silesian Botanical Garden and Organic Farming combines the same ecology-related goals, the initiative to organize in the Silesian Botanical Garden EcoBazar was created, where organic food producers sell their products: vegetables, fruits, eggs, bread, honey and many more. In the autumn of 2013, a pilot action was carried out, during which all doubts related to the legitimacy of organizing EcoBazar were dispelled. The interest of both sellers and buyers exceeded all expectations. It was decided to enter EkoBazar permanently in the schedule of the Silesian Botanical Garden.

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From April 6, 2014, EkoBazar operates every Sunday from 10 to 17. Participants can get food with certificate of production and processing in organic farming or a certificate of traditional and regional products. Visitors of EkoBazar can buy cheese, meats, vegetables, honey, bread, biscuits. EkoBazar also organizes seminars, workshops and actions related to the subject of ecology. Visitors can listen to lectures about healthy food, how to recognize an ecological product, how to read labels. As part of ecological campaigns, visitors can get rid of old electrical and electronic equipment and in return get tickets to cultural institutions (also sport institutions) in Silesia.

All efforts of EkoBazar organizers strive to encourage healthy and ecological life by facilitating access to healthy, unprocessed and unmodified products and all other activities related to ecological themes. The organizers are trying to keep the exhibitors as many as possible.

An additional fact distinguishing EkoBazar in the Silesian Botanical Garden from other similar initiatives is the fact that participants combine business with pleasure. In addition to shopping, visitors can take advantage of all the charms and attractions proposed by the Silesian Botanical Garden. Take a walk, use the playground or arrange a picnic (internet service ecorynek.com 2018).

The promotion of pro-ecological initiatives in municipalities can be implemented using various marketing tools. In the case of the analyzed city of Mikołów, the use of public relations activities in this activity is visible. The active participant is the city Mayor, who creates various kinds of events that refer to ecology and personally gives the example of how to behave in a way that contributes to respect for nature.

In the promotion of pro-ecological activities in Mikołów, elements of cooperation

between municipal authorities and other public services such as municipal guards and institutions such as the Silesian Botanical Garden are visible. These entities conduct actions related to the reduction of low emissions in the city or the collection of used household appliances. These activities are supported by the internet promotion of the discussed initiatives using instructional videos or promoting specific pro-ecological initiatives implemented in Mikołów, which are posted on YouTube or Twitter. Information about these activities can also be found on local websites as well as in Silesia websites.

An example of activity in the sphere of ecology and environmental protection for local government units are usually competitions organized by various organizations, often under the patronage or with the participation of national institutions. In the case of Mikołów city, this type of activity has not been undertaken so far.

Summing up the previous considerations, it can be concluded that the promotion of pro-ecological initiatives in Mikołów is similar with the activities undertaken by municipalities in Poland. A distinguishing element of these activities is the project 'Sharing connect'. Within it, a place where people can bring and give away unnecessary books, clothes, food that has not expired, was created. The analyzed initiative is based on the Western European concept of food sharing. The aim of this project is to make the food, which cannot be eaten before the shelf-life period, does get wasted. Mikołów authorities emphasize that this action is primarily about public awareness and attention to the problem of food waste. In this way, they want to promote good social attitudes and human kindness and, at the same time, limit the amount of food thrown into garbage cans.

Conclusions.

The promotion of pro-ecological activities in municipalities in Poland is becoming increasingly important, due to the increase of ecological awareness of residents, and because of the climate changes that can be observed. Municipalities more and more often focus on effective promotional tools, aimed at generating favorable pro-ecological attitudes of residents, with limited possibilities of spending financial resources for this type of activity. Municipalities strive to optimize marketing activities in this area. The conducted analyzes of promotional activities of pro-ecological activities in Polish cities show that the municipalities use for this

purpose a classic marketing concept with classic mix promotions instruments supported by information placed on the websites of municipal authorities. The city of Mikołów, presented in a case study that is part of this article, tries to combine traditional forms of promotion with innovative activities on a Polish scale in this area, such as the use of Youtube or personal activity of the mayor of this city, manifesting in the creation of PR activities promoting pro-ecological initiatives in this city. It should be noted that in large part these are not expensive projects but based on interesting and creative solutions.

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