

# **BRANDING, MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF MASS COMMUNICATION MEDIA**

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## **АННОТАЦИЯ**

В статье рассматриваются современные подходы и представления, относящиеся к вопросам массовых коммуникаций в медиасреде в контексте маркетинга, брендинга и промоушн. Обобщение существующих подходов, нашло отражение и в практической разработке и реализации ряда региональных медиапроектов, направленных на интегрированное продвижение медиакомпаний и медиабрендов. Автор рассматривает вопросы долгосрочного стратегического планирования развития и продвижения медиакомпаний с т.з. потребительского рынка, структуры медиарынка, формирования конкурентных преимуществ, эффективного позиционирования и формирования медиабрендов.

## **ANNOTATION**

Contemporary questions and approaches of mass communication media are considered in this article applied to marketing, branding and promotion. The summarizing of existed approaches was used in practice when regional media-projects of media companies and brand's integrated promotion have been realized. Author is considering the questions of long-range strategy media companies planning, development and promotion according to consumers' markets, markets' structure, competitive advantages forming, efficiency of market's positioning and media brand's forming.

First of all it's important to say that it's not enough to define only price, quality and "what's new" category for effective and successful business of mass media. A great number of new media appears on market every year. And lot of them appear in

segments of easy way business starting (for example, newspapers and magazines). But on the other side a lot of them disappear at the same time.

So, why does it happen? The answer is it happens because of not so good knowledge and researchers of marketing situation and wrong marketing and business strategies. Therefore we must say that currently marketing is the most important part of modern media business.

Let's give a definition of marketing and media marketing:

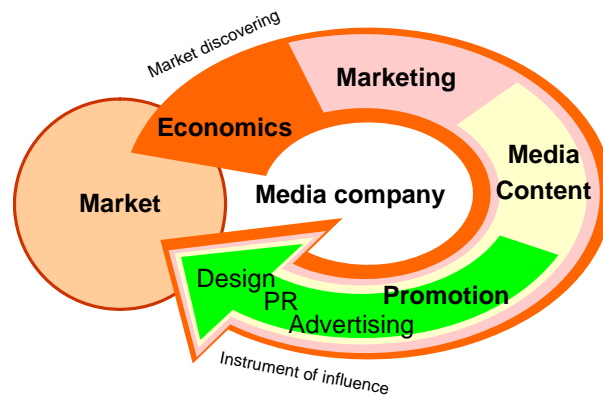
1. Marketing is modern business management system that is based on integrated analyzing of market.

2. Media marketing is analyzing and prediction of market situation for mass media business orientation and providing the best economical conditions of media companies and consumer cooperation. When we talk about media consumer we talk about viewers', listeners', readers' and users' audience.

We should note that market research of mass media – is the background of media marketing. All of the programs and strategies that are created, developed and consolidated for media business should be based on marketing. By the same way new business directions and the priorities of creating and producing different kind of information should be defined and based on marketing.

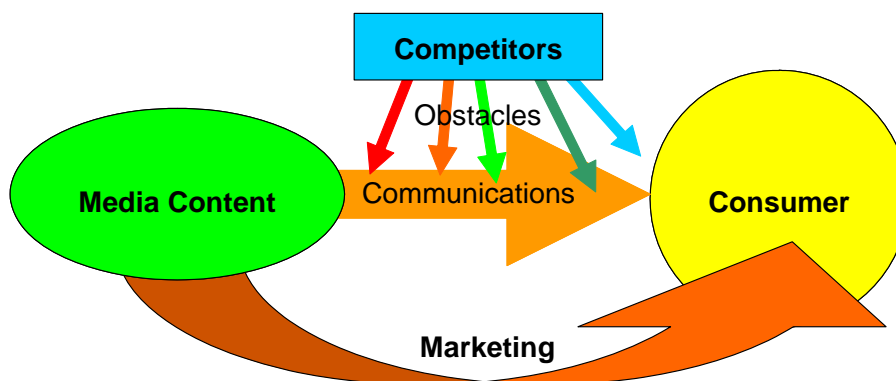
In other words marketing is not only considering of market conditions, but at the same time marketing is the instrument of influence and forming of consumers' demand with the help of advertising, promotion, public relations and so on. Of course this instrument has economical impact on consumer's activity by way of pricing, facilities, discounts and service advantages.

Please, take a look at this picture – this is how economics, marketing and promotion are integrated in media business:



Picture 1. Task and goals of integrated economics, marketing and promotion for media business.

It is worth paying attention that when we talk about marketing relationship – we talk about **competition**. This competition makes obstacles (or “noises”) on the way of communication between our media and consumer. Such influence is shown on next picture:



Picture 2. Influence of competition on communication between media and consumer.

The next conclusion follows from the illustration – we can provide hi level of competitive ability for media business with the help of marketing. That means marketing provides more profitable marketing conditions at the expense of overcoming and neutralization of competitor’s business influence. In addition, marketing provides correspondence between produced information and consumer’s demands.

The one of the main object of market's research is defining of current correspondence between demand and supply. And to define this correspondence we have to analyze the next points:

1) analyzing of presented media (newspapers, tv- and radio-programs, etc.) **is a supply**;

2) analyzing of demand or analyzing of what kind of information and entertainment people need **is a demand**.

For example, when we analyze market of newspapers we have to get a full range of information about the next items:

- common description of newspapers (national, regional or local press);
- distribution in groups (daily, weekly press);
- distribution in “kind of information” (public and/or political, commercial, for kids, for women, etc.);
- distribution in other characteristics (colorful, type, volume, kind of property, etc.).

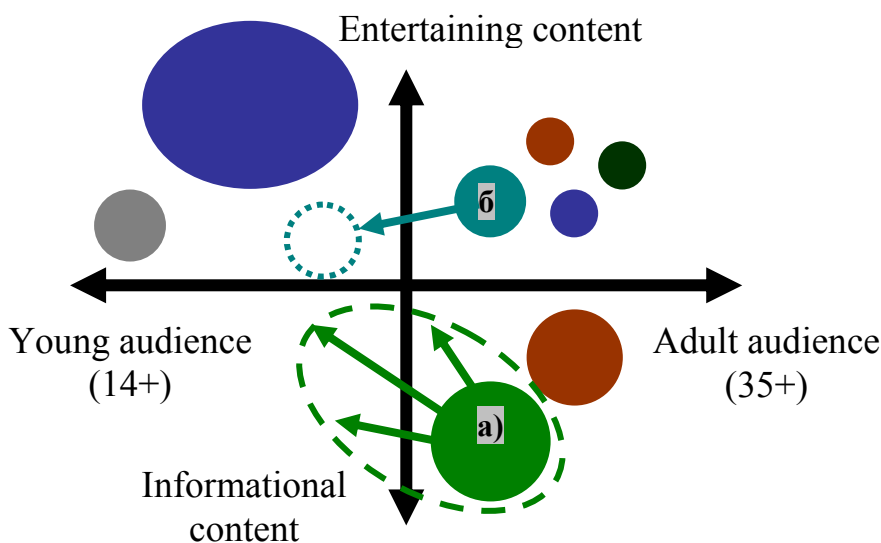
### **The main methods of marketing: competitive market research.**

The majority of currently existing approaches is that competitive market research is the key element of business strategy development in mass media. We can use next criteria when analyzing competitors:

- financial information;
- share of market;
- competitive advantages;
- geography of expansion;
- serviced markets and clients;
- features of business launching;
- resources and advantages evaluation of competitors.

According to these criteria the selection of competitors is carried out to choose one of the most important. Then it's very useful to make a “positioning map” that

describes positions, scale of our company and competitors. The example is illustrated on next picture:



Picture 3. Scheme of media companies positions on “positioning map” according to consumer’s groups and media content characteristics.

It’s possible to evaluate current distribution of market possibilities and perspectives of business developing, expansion and brand positioning with the help of this “positioning map”.

According to this map you can choose between “increasing” of current position (for example, when you make a little changes of your media content and expand it for neighbor segments of audience – version a.) or totally repositioning and totally changing segment of audience (version b.).

We have carried out more detailed analyzing of competitors in all of components of “vertical production line” such as producing, packaging and distribution media.

### **The main methods of marketing: demand analyzing.**

To archive objective analyzing of consumer’s demand we have to:

1. Determining market potential. It means selecting consumers who are interested in certain type of information and who are ready to pay for it. Then

we have to define advertisers who are interesting in reach of certain kind of consumers. There are several methods – polling, competitor’s publication analyzing, test publication consignment (“pilot” version, for example), etc.

2. Exploring marketing penetration. This is already busy share of market.
3. Determining one’s market share. It depends on research of market penetration. Some times all of the market’s segments are busy, but if you have a number of advantages (for example, additional services, distributions, design, etc.), you can believe that you manage to crowd out (or replace) one of the competitors.
4. Making a segmentation of the market. It means marking out different segments of audience with respect to certain type of features: age, social status, live style, etc.

After all of these tasks are completed media company makes a decision about next two points:

1. Choice of market coverage:

- one or two main segments (concentrated marketing);
- a number of market segments (differentiated marketing);
- media “for all” (undifferentiated marketing).

2. Positioning of mass communication media with respect to competitor’s positioning.

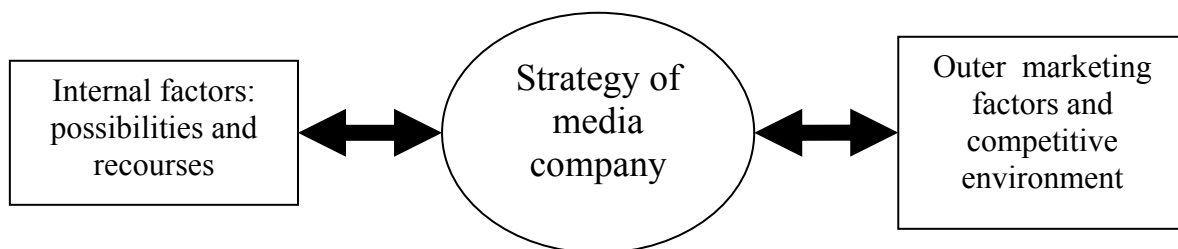
One of the main tasks of marketing in positioning is determination of price for media (price for newspaper, for example). You should note that the Price is the main reference point of marketing behavior for some kind of mass communication media (newspapers, for example).

But sometimes the term of price has unfocused character in case when “consumer doesn’t pay” for some kind of media. In these cases the other sides of positioning obtain the main meaning.

Anyway the price depends on distribution system. And at the same time price determination should be correlated with internal resources and production and distribution expenses. For example, using “lower prices” may attract a lot of readers

(audience), but at the same time it may cause bad financial conditions for media company.

So, in that way we have to take into account the dependence and the reference between outer marketing factors and correlation of production, management, marketing and financial components of media business (internal factors) when we are analyzing or planning marketing strategies of media companies.



Picture 4. Scheme of correspondence between internal and outer factors when media strategy is defined.

### **Integrated analysis as a background of media promotion strategy.**

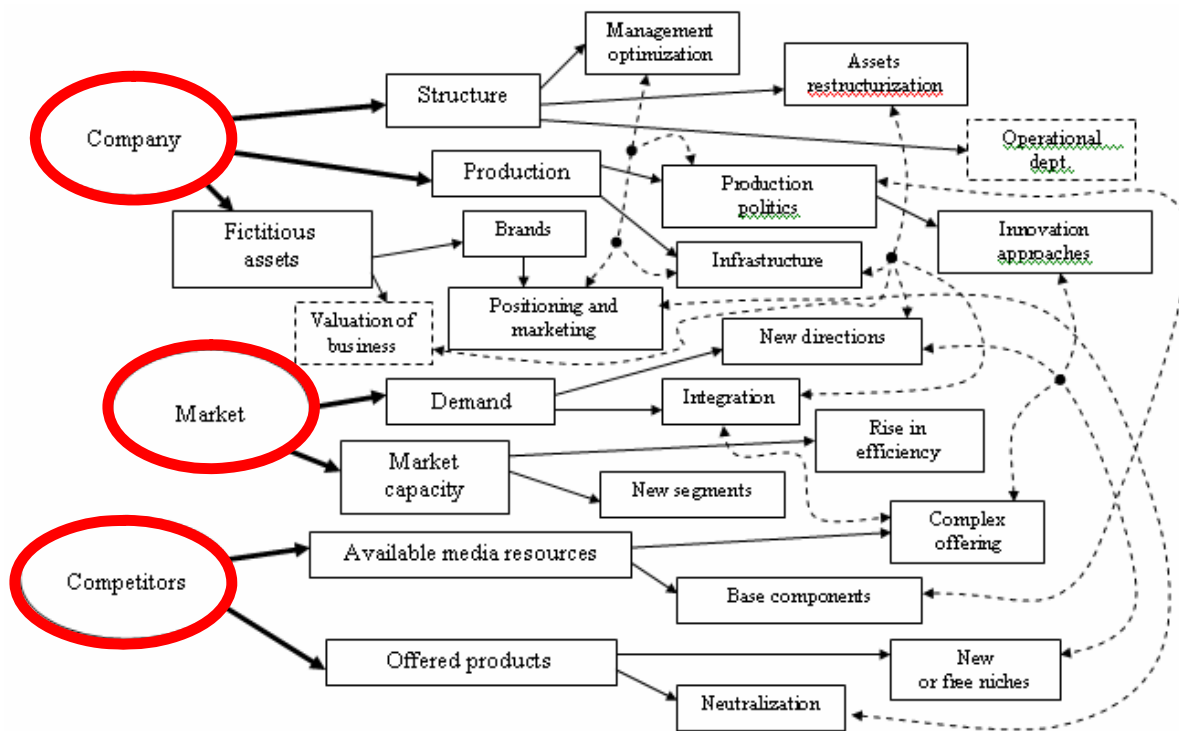
There are several types of goals and objectives for integrated analysis of media business: launching of new business or entering into new marketplaces, accounting of credit worthiness (or trustworthiness) for investors, defining policy or strategy of internal company development, proofing of collaboration efficiency, etc.

Integrated analysis lets us to describe current position and predict perspective marketing position of media company.

The marketing position depends on a number of factors, that determine company advantages in comparison with competitors:

- efficiency of selling system (marketing and sale infrastructure),
- consumer price (price),
- price level of advertising recourses,
- media content quality characteristics,
- rating and circulation,
- reach of audience

and number of other factors.



Picture 5. The main directions of integrated analysis and strategic planning.

Using these advantages a company takes a chance to remove competitors of the market, enhance volume of selling and have an effect on market middle level of prices by manipulation of selling volume. By this way the company can improve finances, for example, clear profit (прибыль) as a result.

Integrated analysis can not be successful without considering outer factors and media field features, which determine the conditions of media business. The research of any field starts from growth possibilities accounting and market analysis as usual. For example, SWOT-analysis (Strong and Weak sides, Opportunities and Tensions); competitor's analysis; key financial factors analysis.

### Typical strategies of media company promotion and development.

The typical strategies of mass communication media development are the following.

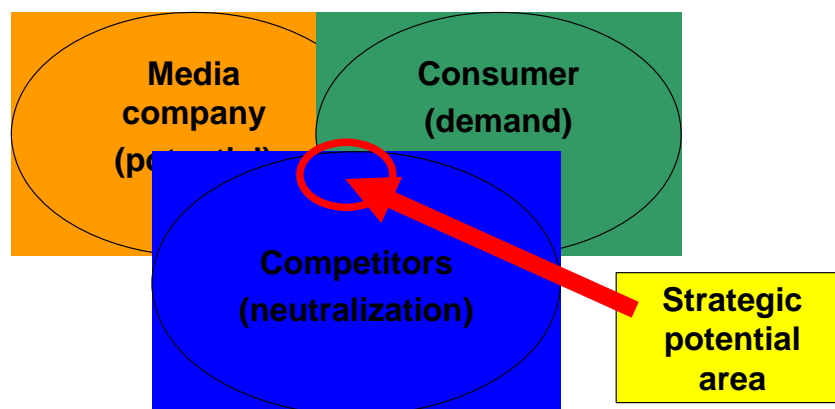
1. Strategy of expenses minimization – is based on analysis of internal “vertical production line” and discovering expenses optimization opportunities for separate stages of business.

2. Strategy of differentiation or strategy of differences forming. In case of mass media it means not only media content differences, but also differences of the media companies. And the positioning plays a great role in this process.

3. Strategy of totally concentration – is built around certain audience servicing or client service. Restricted segments competition takes place, if media company chooses this strategy. This strategy suits niche media (restricted segment media – cable television, for example), and this is not acceptable for periodical informational print (for example, newspapers with hi circulation), but it's good enough for specialized magazines in restricted consumers segments.

Beside, if media company makes business in small market part it is easy to achieve leadership in expenses minimization or follow differentiation strategy in restricted segment.

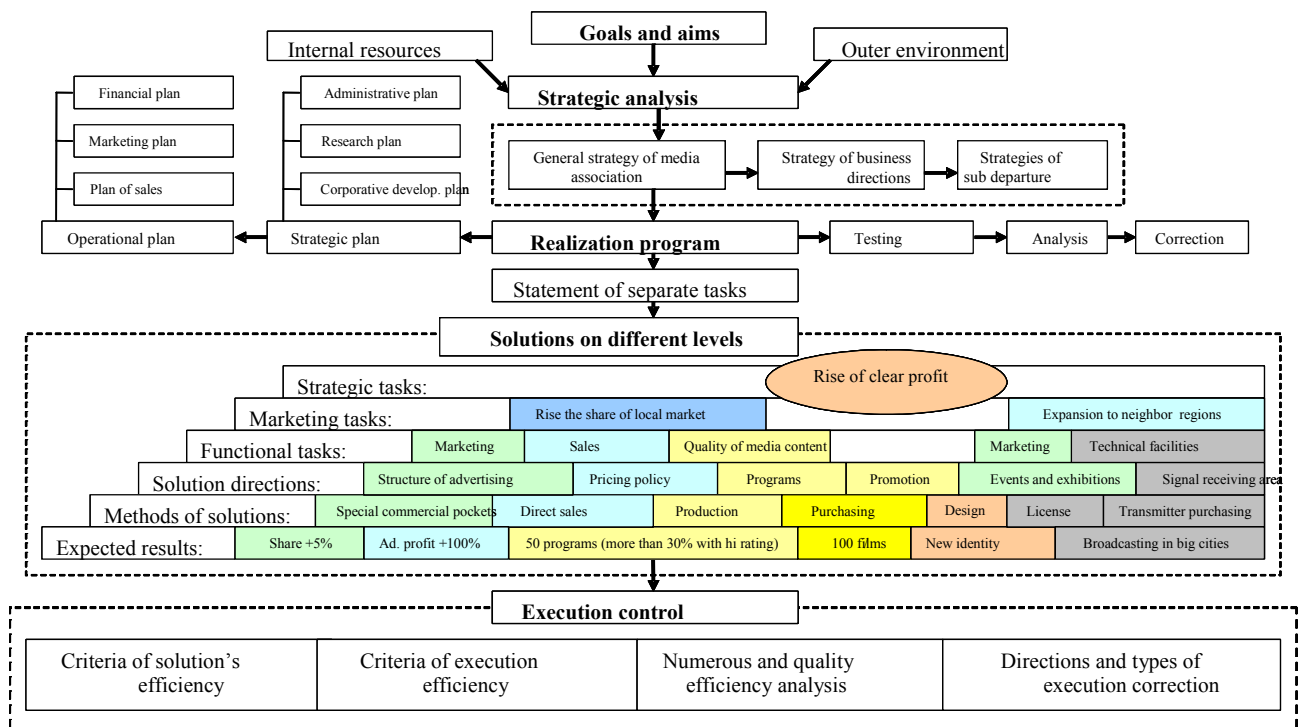
In general, analysis of company, competitors and consumers' market makes it possible to define “strategic potential”, which permits to define individual strategy and promotion and development strategy for media companies.



Picture 6. Defining of development strategy for mass media.

This “strategic potential” is concentrated in intersection area of internal resources and advantages (company potentials), possibilities of competitors’ neutralization and consumers’ market potential (consumer’s demand).

In practice, any strategies of media development and promotion should be based on economics solutions. We can use special “solution tree” to obtain complex tasks solution in a simple way.



Picture 7. “Solution tree” for strategies development.

### Niche marketing, positioning and media branding .

First of all we should note that today’s competitive level of mass communication media is too high, as well as similarity of media content. The audience relationship to trade mark or media company is one of the most important indicator of media business efficiency.

In other words, we talk about image or brand of mass communication media that is formed with respect to positioning and niche marketing.

**Niche marketing.** To begin with I would like to tell you that selection of marketing niche is the most important element of leadership when lots of media and media information exist.

There are some of the basic types of niche:

Program niche or content niche is characterized by certain kind of programs or information that is related to news, sport events or even more specialized terms.

Demographic niche – orientation on a certain group of people is the basic of this niche. For examples, woman - housewife, students, businessmen, etc.

Psychographic niche – is based on a certain group of people that have some relation to the environment or some ideology. The mass communication media that working in this niche is said to be extraordinary or extravagant.

Some of media companies are able to work even in two niches. For example, MTV was presented in program and demographic niches for a long time. However, later it was repositioned in psychographic niche forced by consumers' demand changing. In this way MTV has defined its own format as a special kind of thinking, relation to music and lifestyle.

The niche marketing usage lets us to focus on certain segments of audience, redirect it towards media company, satisfy their informational needs and interest during a long time. The process of niche selecting depends on positioning.

**Positioning.** The term of positioning by itself defines the certain position of mass communication media or media channel in market. But you should note that this position is just position in people's mind (readers, viewers or users). It means the media is linked or associated with a number of certain unique distinctions in thoughts of audience. First of all, these distinctions are distinctions from competitors.

In particular tuning out or distinction from competitors is the first element of successful positioning. And the number of unique characteristics allows the audience to separate exactly and to prefer one media to each other. That means the preference or audience's choice is focused on media channel that is positioned according to audience's demands of information, analytics, entertainments and etc.

Often, the positioning is defined as personal philosophy that allows not only to define the difference between media content's distinctions, but to form personal, pronounced (ярко выраженные) characteristics also.

By the end of the competent positioning is defining by adequacy to the consumer that combines its distinctions and characteristics with respect to the group of people whom media is oriented on.

In general, for successful positioning it is necessary to combine all of these three components. The existence of personal philosophy interesting to consumers makes our media equal to other ones and doesn't create any preferences when there are no distinctions from competitors. At the other hand, if our media have bright personality and philosophy not like others, but it's not adequate to consumer, then we would not find our audience.

So, as we have already told, the positioning is defined by unique characteristics or distinctions that are called brand attributes. Of course they could be formed by itself in consumer's mind in a random way. It may cause when we are not able to control the relationship-forming processes for our brand. In this case we can archive wrong positioning and undesired perception of our media. For example, they may think that we are too expensive media, but we would like to be accessible.

That means the positioning should be formed and it should be done in a certain direction with respect to strategy of media promotion. The positioning strategy gives us the answer to the question what and how to do it to form one of the niches and archive a success.

It's very important to be distinguishable. Distinguishes and features are everywhere, but these should not be "idle". Distinguishes should be declared with the help of PR and promotion, these should be demonstrated with the help of design and advertising.

The positioning process is very close to branding meaning.

### **Media branding.**

The conception of media branding has economical, marketing nature and reflects social side of the media and relationship with consumer at the same time.

As we already know, today it's not enough to have just interesting content of media to attract the audience. Modern media branding is based on this understanding. Besides we should be certain whether:

- 1) our audience has been informed about media accessibility (place of newspapers sale, time of television programs),

- 2) the consumer's occasion (повод) has been given to believe that this media content is important for the audience (useful of content),
- 3) the media content has been identified as the certain media channel.

In this way branding creates image for media that confirms correspondence between the media content and the audience.

Well positioned media with strong and recognizable brand-image have more chances to reach the audience. It is obvious, that advertising in this media has more chances to reach the audience also. Therefore, the main activities in promotion of media should be forwarded to form image of media company or image of media brand. The right choice of media positioning plays the main role in this long and continuous process.

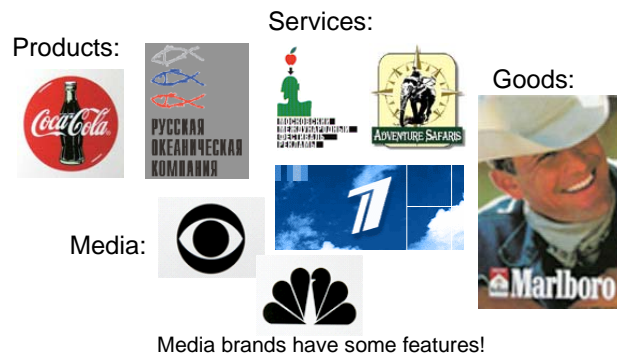
According to one of the main generally accepted determinations: Brand is complex perception of product in consumer's mind [1].

If there is no competition in the market then it is followed by the absence (отсутствие) of brands need. If there is only one product in the market, consumer doesn't have any choice. When competition appears then the brands also take place. In this case the brands are needed to distinguish similar products [2].

That means competition becomes stronger in marketing conditions. We should not expect that competitors will have less professionalism and we should not expect that just today's success will define future success of our company. We have to build longtime and perspective relationship with consumer and to form consumer's loyalty to our brand [3].

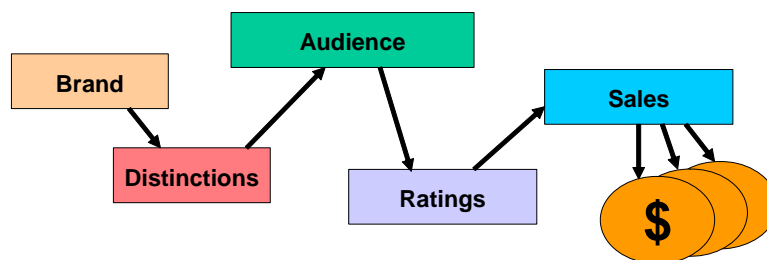
### **The main distinctions of media brands and product brands.**

Media brands do not look like product brands. Media brands are: changeable, emotional, high intensive, continuous and passive in use. In addition media brands have social function.



Picture 8. Examples of media brands and product brands.

In fact media brands creation demands full integration of the next items: information content, content's structure and promotion. These items let media brand to focus on a certain segment of target audience.

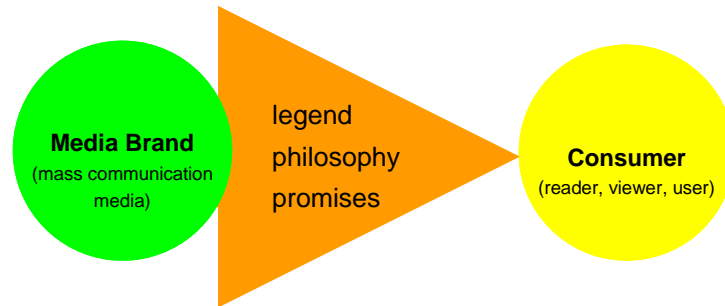


Picture 9. Media brands "make money".

Media branding includes goal-oriented activities in forming consumer's perception and relations that have strong association with trade mark of media:

- **How are brands identified?** Brands are identified by sign, Trade Mark, logo, firm style with different components, mission or main idea (brand concept), etc.
- **How are brands demonstrated?** Attributes, behavior and character of brand demonstrate different sides of brand personality.
- **What do people think about our brand?** We can get this information from marketing researches and different analytics.
- **What do we want them to think about our brand?** It depends on brand strategy and positioning that we developed for branding and promotion.
- **How to form media brand and control it?** There are some kinds of visualization for understanding of media branding. One of them is called "brand tree" that

illustrates how media brand is formed and how brand's personalities, strategy and appearances are linked. At the same time "brand tree" makes rules for group of brand-management that is responsible for any brand's activities.



Picture 10. Media brands bring philosophy to consumer.

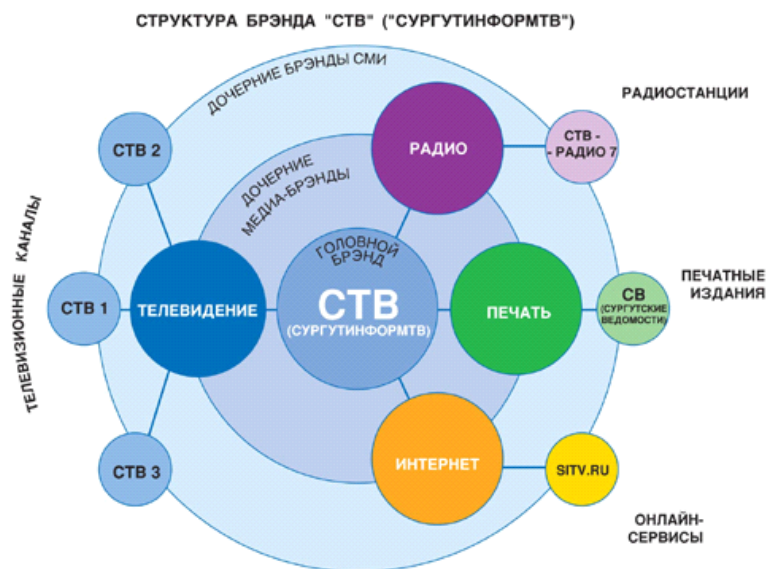
In this picture we can see the way of media brand communication with the consumer (readers, viewers, users and etc.) Media brand should have personal legend or philosophy that gives some promises to audience. Of course these promises should be actual and reasonable for the certain audience and this audience has to trust the brand.

Further more, to be effective in this way of communication we have to:

- touch consumer imagination,
- “fall into the heart” to get loyal consumer,
- keep in touch with feelings and emotions.

In this case the media will be interesting, emotional and reasonable for the audience.

The real brand structure of STV media company from Surgut city is presented on the next picture. The main brand is a head of this brand structure in the center of this scheme. And the secondary brands that are called daughter brands present associated companies.



Picture 11. STV brand-structure.

The main principle of these brands correlation is called “umbrella brands” that means image of the main brand determines the relationship of the audience with the daughter brands in one way. In the other way the daughter brands are forming the head-brand. So we should consider each of these brands to archive generally effective positioning and promotion.

1. Lee Hunt. “The basics of broadcast branding and promotion”. Москва, "Галерия", 2001.
2. Гусева О.В. Брендинг. - М. “Экономическая книга”, 2000.
3. Томас Гэд. 4D Брендинг: «Взламывая корпоративный код сетевой экономики». Стокгольмская школа экономики. Спб. 2003.