

RALUCA GALOȘ

ADVERTISING. FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING TO MEDIA
IMPLEMENTATION

Raluca Galoș

Doctoral School of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Department of Engineering Sciences and Management, Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Email: ralufranciska@yahoo.com

Review of Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Media Implementation*, (Iași: Polirom, 2009).

Key Words: advertising, strategic planning, media in advertising, symbolic interaction, intercultural communication, mythology and symbols in advertising, Delia Cristina Balaban

Delia Cristina Balaban, the coordinator of the Graduate and Master's Studies in Advertising programs of the Babes-Bolyai University, is a recognized specialist as author or coordinator of the following volumes: *Advertising Communication* (2005), *Miniguide of the jobs in Public Relations and Advertising* (2007), *Mediatic Communication* (2009), *Strategy and Creativity in Advertising* (2007) and *Public Relations Trend, Society and Communication* (2009) etc.

Delia Cristina Balaban proposes a very topical theme, that of advertising communication, the new revised and enlarged edition of the book: *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Media Implementation*, published in Iaşi, by Polirom, in 2009. The volume is important in terms of the topics covered: the advertising agency, advertising and advertisements, image in advertising, planning and strategy in advertising, creativity in advertising, media in advertising, BTL advertising, paradigms in researching the effects of advertising, elements of intercultural communication in advertising. Over time, advertising has been the subject of various confrontations between experts on the role played by the advertisement approach: means of information, communication tool or an art. This volume comes into the context of the confrontation of ideas and tries to familiarize the reader with some classic themes required to understand advertising as an academic subject, means of communication and intercultural exchange.

In the context of our contemporary society, advertising plays an increasingly complex role; advertising is subject to diversification and multiplication of the concrete forms that it takes. The literature provides numerous criteria for the classification of advertising, but this is a purely theoretical taxonomy. In practice there are very few advertisements that fit into one category and most can be classified in several categories simultaneously.

The literature abounds with definitions of advertising. A definition that deserves to hold our attention is the one proposed by Michael J. Baker, who states that advertising is the science, business or profession of creating and disseminating advertising messages, a social institution that affects the daily life of each individual, a force that shapes popular culture, a component of marketing or a source of information about products, services, events, individuals or institutions¹. A particular way of defining advertising is provided by C. Popescu, who shows that advertising has been defined as a complex persuasive activity which attaches symbolic assemblies to goods and services in order to determine various audiences to purchase them². However, advertising is also defined as a communication technique that supposes the conducting of a complex persuasive approach, for the achievement of which specific instruments are used, capable of causing psychological pressure on the target audience³.

In her analysis on the different ways of defining advertising, Delia Cristina Balaban helps us distinguish advertising from advertisements, to distinguish advertising from manipulation, even though both are forms of persuasive communication; to distinguish between advertising and propaganda, "the latter being a form of manipulation in religion and politics"; she helps us understand advertising as a "form of communication, of symbolic interaction through a message, between the one who sends out an advertisement and the one who perceives it (through images and/or sounds)"⁴. Among the functions of advertising, Delia Cristina Balaban mentions: the function of information, the function of motivation, the social function, the economic function, the political function, the persuasive function, the poetic or artistic function.⁵ An interesting nuance is brought by Delia Cristina Balaban in one of her studies which examines how religion is intertwined with the politics when advertising takes the form of political communication. She examines how the media covers the interaction between the church and political parties and how political advertising tries to transfer the trust that Romanians have in the church and Christian values to political players, beyond any ideological communication⁶.

An important aspect in understanding advertising is to understand the difference between advertising communication and marketing communications. M. J. Decaudin⁷, emphasizes that advertisement creation is not the task of the advertising company's marketing department, but of the advertising agency's staff, but the managers of the client company should favour the creation of a message compatible with the objectives of the advertising campaign. Thus, we understand why Delia Cristina Balaban chooses to start her book with systemized explanations concerning the advertising agency and its way of operating and networking⁸. Even if it is a distinct field of communication, in the analysis of Delia Cristina Balaban advertising keeps close relations with marketing communication⁹.

Delia Cristina Balaban is also known as a specialist in media communications, her works in this area are reference works for the entire Romanian academic environment. Invariably, the author stresses that "the relationship between advertising and the media is one of interdependence; the media are distribution channels absolutely necessary to transmit the advertising message, and advertising is a financial source without which the work of some media institutions would be impossible to conceive".¹⁰

An important idea circulating in the literature, and which is very convincingly presented by Delia Cristina Balaban as well, is the necessity of using the media mix. It involves combining different advertising media and environments in order to reach the target audience. We can speak of two alternatives in terms of media mix, namely the focused mix and the combined mix¹¹. The advantages of using the focused media mix, which involves using a single advertising medium, refers to: the possibility to

dominate the competition in a particular advertising medium, the development of preferential relations with the media institution based on loyalty and which often lead to preferential fees. On the other hand, using a combined mix of media brings the following benefits: the probability of contacting a higher percentage of the target audience is larger, the coverage is generally higher than in the case of a concentrated media mix, the exposure to the message through various media and advertising environments can stimulate the audience to remember it; in addition, the synergistic effect is much greater in this case. The disadvantage of the combined media mix is that production costs are higher and it is necessary to use the various types of media with the appropriate creative demands. The combined media mix is made up, usually, by a primary medium, which is the focus of strategy and finances, and by secondary media¹².

An important dimension of advertising is the presence of intercultural communication elements, considering the growing importance of global advertising. Delia Cristina Balaban analyses these dimensions as reflections in the final chapter of the book¹³. The author discusses the issue in terms of culture as defined by Geert Hofstede "Culture as the software of the human mind." Thus, a cultural model involves religious or mythological motifs, rituals, values, symbols, culture-specific heroes. These elements intervene in the way advertising gets to present messages in different cultural areas of the global world¹⁴. In this context "the myth is considered to be an important catalyst for advertising creativity."¹⁵

Analyzing the work of Mădălina Moraru, *Myth and advertising*, Delia Cristina Balaban notes that advertising is adapting to the cultural context (mythological and religious) using in its language classical myths, myths about origins or erotic myths, or types of relationships which we associate with rituals, with exemplary or religious behaviour, with everything that can be linked to the idea of archetypes.¹⁶

Referring to the important role of advertising in influencing cultural and social values, Ronald Berman points out that the influence of traditional institutions such as family, religion and school in creating cultural values has declined, while advertising becomes a kind of social guide, which underlines a variety of possible situations related to life and freedom of choice, providing ideas on styles, morality and behaviour¹⁷. Thus, advertising gets to determine what is right or wrong in society. Delia Cristina Balaban has such a perspective in mind when she warns us that whenever we analyze advertising "we should not forget to take a look at the ethical dimension of using mythology and symbols in advertising".¹⁸

Notes:

¹ M. J. Baker, *Macmillan Dictionary of Marketing & Advertising*, (London: Macmillan Business, 1998), 6.

² C. Popescu, *Introduction to Advertising*, (Bucharest: Bucharest University Publishing House, 2005), 9

³ P. Mălcome, C-tin Florescu, N. Al. Pop (coord.), *Marketing. Explanatory Dictionary*, (Bucharest: Economical Publishing House, 2003), 585.

⁴ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, (Iaşi: Polirom, 2009), 36.

⁵ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, 47.

⁶ Ioana Iancu, Delia Cristina Balaban, „Religion and Political Communication During Elections in Romania”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 8, No. 24 (Winter 2009): 151-167.

⁷ M. J. Decaudin, *La communication marketing. Concepts, techniques, strategies*, in C. Dobre, *Comportamentul consumatorului şi strategia de comunicare a firmei*, (Timişoara, Ed. Solness, 2003), 310.

⁸ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, 9-22.

⁹ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, 23-48. See also Delia Cristina Balaban, Ioana Iancu, “The Role of PR in the Public Sector. Case Study on PR Professionalization at the Local Level in Romania”, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, No. 27E (October / 2009): 22-38.

¹⁰ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, 127.

¹¹ J. Hintikka, “On the Incommensurability of Theories”, *Philosophy of Science*, vol. 55, (1988): 25 – 38.

¹² G. E. Greenley, “Marketing Planning Processes in U. K. and U. S. Companies”, *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, vol. 2, no. 2 (1994): 140 – 154.

¹³ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, 251-257.

¹⁴ Delia Cristina Balaban, *Advertising. From Strategic Planning to Implement Media*, 256.

¹⁵ Delia Cristina Balaban, “Myths, Archetypes and Stereotypes in Contemporary Romanian Advertising Communication”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 9, no. 26 (Summer 2010): 247.

¹⁶ Delia Cristina Balaban, “Myths, Archetypes and Stereotypes in Contemporary Romanian Advertising Communication”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 9, no. 26 (Summer 2010): 245.

¹⁷ G. E. Belch, M. A. Belch, *Advertising and Promotion. An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective*, (McGraw Hill Inc., 2004), 762. For relationship between cultural diversity, cultural behavior, and political culture see Levente Salat, Monica Căluşer, Amelia Gorcea, Olimpia Moşteanu, “Ethnocultural Diversity and Aspects of Political Culture”, *Transylvanian Review of Administrative Sciences*, No. 27E (October / 2009): 199-219.

¹⁸ Delia Cristina Balaban, “Myths, Archetypes and Stereotypes in Contemporary Romanian Advertising Communication”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 9, no. 26 (Summer 2010): 247. A debate on the presence of ethics in public space and public communication see Mihaela Frunză, Sandu Frunză, “Etică, superstiţie şi laicizarea spaţiului public” (Ethics, Superstition and the Laicization

of the Public Sphere) in *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 8, no. 23, (Summer 2009): 13-35.