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TV PROGRAM BRANDS IN BRAND PORTFOLIO OF TELEVISION COMPANIES

Abstract. A characteristic feature of the modern TV market is an extremely high level of competition between market players for attracting attention of TV viewers between both broadcasters and other means of media. One of the negative consequences of such situation is the so-called media cannibalism. Considering such difficult market conditions experts suggest that the solution of this problem lies in formation of TV brands, at least among the TV companies. However, generally the brand portfolio of a TV company is diversified and includes various separate brands: TV channels, TV programs, TV anchormen, production studios and others. A systematic analysis of the system of brands formation within the TV companies reveals that the TV program brands play an important role in the formation process.

Keywords: brand, brand portfolio, brand portfolio structure, branding in the television company.

Problem definition and its connection with important scientific and practical tasks. Current rapid increase of competition active participants of TV market heightened competition between TV companies for the attention of viewers. As a result, we can observe a significant increase of competition in TV companies brands portfolio formation. Experts consider the brand formation of TV programs as one of the most important tools used by TV companies to attract the viewers. The article defines the meaning of brand portfolio of a TV company, its structure and the place of TV program brands. Resolution of the problem of TV program brands formation would help to understand the relevant practical problems of TV companies and allow expanding the scientific base for further analysis of the TV branding problems.

Analysis of recent publications on this problem and determination still unsolved aspects of the general problem. Problems of branding in the sphere of TV communication have been studied in the works of scientists and experts. Among of them, primarily, such authors as: M. Rogers, M. Epstein and J. Reeves¹, Z. Fanbin and H. Wang², E. Yanak³, C. Johnson⁴, A. Bryant⁵, S. Sukhpreet⁶, H. Lee and others.

It is widely accepted that media corporations use branding to connect together media products produced in specific network companies and to differentiate them from similar products created by competitors. As rightly M. Rogers, M. Epstein and J. Reeves, US TV branding experts, conclude: "Branding also helps significantly reduce the financial risks associated with elaboration of the new media products using already established relationships between consumers and media brands"⁷.

¹ Rogers, Mark C., Epstein, Michael and Reeves, Jimmie L. (2002). The Sopranos as HBO brand equity: the art of commerce in the age of digital production. *This Thing of Ours: Investigating The Sopranos*. London: Wallflower, 42–57.

² Fanbin, Zeng, Han, Wang (2012). Brand-Building of Pay TV Channel. *Business and Management Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, 61–70.

³ Yanak, Elizabeth A. The Effects of Prime Time Sub-Branding in Network Television: An Analysis of NBC. <<http://www.drexel.edu/article/22197/Effects-of-prime-sub-must-see-tv>>.

⁴ Johnson, Catherine (2007). Tele-branding in TV III. The network as brand and the programme as brand. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 5–24.

⁵ Bryant, Andy. Long Live Channel Brands. <<http://www.redbeemedia.com/blog/long-live-channel-brands>>.

⁶ Sukhpreet, Singh. Building TV programme brands in the digital multi-channel world – perspectives of the UK television professionals. *Bournemouth*. <http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/12157/1/Building_Telev_Brands.pdf>.

⁷ Rogers, Mark C., Epstein, Michael and Reeves, Jimmie L. (2002). The Sopranos as HBO brand equity: the art of commerce in the age of digital production. *This Thing of Ours: Investigating The Sopranos*. London: Wallflower, 47.

Z. Fanbin and H. Wong, Chinese researchers, define the brand role in the market TV services as: “The brand can become the basis for the main choice for many viewers who have never tired watching some TV channels and programs. The influence of television products that are attractive to the audience is mainly due to brand. Even, if they are sold at a higher price. Thus, the brand creation and development – a main rule for TV companies to succeed in a difficult competitive situation. This is also true for all media. In other words, only with the creation and expansion of brand media its value can increase the brand loyalty and will provide a greater return on investment capital to get even broader space for development⁸.”

Another important factor that determines the need for branding is a natural desire of TV companies to ensure their own existence in the future. Alexander Rodnyansky, well-known Ukrainian TV producer, predicts that the development of world TV business by 2025. Particular, he anticipates the emergence of thousands of new TV channels that will focus on narrower audience segments. For example, TV channels not just for history fans in general – but for lovers of the Middle Ages history; not for experts of physics – but for the specialists in low temperature physics, etc. “For the appearance of the TV channel will be sufficient even 100,000 viewers. To name this media channel only like television will be difficult. The differences between the computer and TV will be almost absent. From the current mass channels, only the units could survive in the digital future – those whose brand is stronger. Despite the almost limitless choices, millions of viewers prefer such TV channels where someone has made for them the optimal TV viewing grid. Only those TV channels that would have created great brand portfolios will survive. Any attempt to expand the audience is doomed to failure. For TV viewers that are remained will have to fight with many competitors – for instance, in the entertainment television not TV channels will be considered as brand, but, rather, it will be TV programs or TV anchormen” – said the expert⁹.

Concept of TV company brand is directly connected the concept of brand portfolio. Today, almost all market proposals are branded. Business is often faced with a situation where the market cannot be covered only by one brand. So, in this condition company creates several brands. According to business dictionary the brand portfolio is defined as a business resource: “The total set of brands products or services which are available at the company”¹⁰. The same concept is interpreted by O. Zozuliov and N. Kubyshyna, Ukrainian scientists: “... as the total number of all brands and product lines that are offering by a company within a specific product category”¹¹. Another author, V. Zotov, provides: “The portfolio of several brands – this is not a set of independent brands; the company is striving to dominate on the marketplace, requiring its maximum coverage. And it’s often impossible to use one single brand”¹².

Similar to the concept of brand portfolio is the brand architecture. David Aaker and Erich Yohimshtayler, the famous experts of brand management, defined this concept as: «Brand architecture – is an organizational structure of brand portfolio that defines the role of brands and the relationships between them. Thus, brand architecture – a tool that allows a group of brands operate as one system, to prevent brand cannibalism within the portfolio and provides brand synergy and development of the company as a whole”¹³.

Let’s consider more specifically the concept of brand TV program and its place in brand portfolio of a TV company. Elizabeth Yanak, American researcher defines the TV program brand as: “The result of marketing activities on the formation of TV program content as the target product, that is different from the other, changing programs and helps to identify television network, which become is widely recognizable”¹⁴. In our opinion, the essential characteristics of the brand program should also include the certain elements of corporate identity, a single brand name, the creative concept, etc.

Advanced analysis of scientific sources allows us to formulate the concept of TV program brand. By this term, we mean, a set of telecasts, integrated by a single brand name and creative concept, aimed to target certain audience of TV viewership, and characterized by the appropriate level of awareness, identity and loyalty from viewers.

⁸ Fanbin, Zeng, Han, Wang (2012). Brand-Building of Pay TV Channel. *Business and Management Research*, vol. 1, no. 3, 62.

⁹ Промптова, О. (2006). ТВ в 2025 году: когда всё смешается. *Ведомости*.

¹⁰ Brand portfolio. <<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/brand-portfolio.html#ixzz3cinyFR3u>>.

¹¹ Зозулев, А.В., Кубышина, Н.С. (2010). *Маркетинг*. Київ: Знання, 89.

¹² Зотов, В.В. (2008). *Управление портфелем брендов*. Москва: Моск. гос. унив-т экономики, статистики и информатики, 54.

¹³ Аакер, Д., Йохимштайлер, Э. (2003). *Бренд-лидерство: новая концепция брендинга*. Москва: ИД Гребенникова, 122.

¹⁴ Yanak, Elizabeth A. The Effects of Prime Time Sub-Branding in Network Television: An Analysis of NBC. <<http://www.drexel.edu/article/22197/Effects-of-prime-sub-must-see-tv>>.

Catherine Johnson, British scientist, defines the criteria that must be followed in the case of a TV program brand formation. She provides, “In order to become a brand, the TV program must satisfy the following requirements: durability, often repeatability and ability to transfer to other media channels. Those TV programs, that acquire the position of the brand, should offer multiple means of access for viewership. It subsequently leads to the fact that the brand begins to affect the viewer”¹⁵. She also articulates the importance of using practical approach to TV program as a brand: “Understanding TV program as a brand provides the method which allows to analyzing a wide range of TV products”¹⁶. Andy Bryant, American researcher, stresses the importance of the influence of TV program brands on previous attitude to them by viewers. He refers to the results of his own research according to which 71% of respondents agreed that TV program brand affected to their expectations from the program review¹⁷.

We should note that in some cases, heading (always certain part of TV program) can also be a separate brand. Thus, a good example of this – is the heading “Mad Handles”, which used to be a part of the TV program “While all at home” broadcasted by The First Russian TV channel. Brand “Mad Handles” by the level of awareness, popularity and loyalty of the audience have not yield to relevant characteristics of many others telecasts.

Quite important problem is the study of relationship between TV channel brands and the brands of TV programs. Danny Cohen, the manager of a powerful British TV channel «Channel 4» believes that brand management on the TV market operates on two levels: “For TV channel is very important to have a clear position on the chaotic market. On the television market there are many identities between different channels and the availability of excellent unique offerings are crucial to survive. You need to have a brand that can differentiate on the marketplace and has an original corporate identity. At the micro level, you have TV program brands that could play an important role within the overall branding of TV channel. For example, the key characteristic of our “micro brand” is the quality of our software products and its identity; also we have some TV program brands that have a solid reputation, it is very important for the brand of TV channel”¹⁸. In our opinion, the union of brand portfolio system only by two levels (micro and macro) and also their completely identification with the brands of TV channels and TV programs is somewhat a simplistic approach. It is simply because such system omits the corporate brands of TV companies, brands of TV anchormen and other important elements that we have already mentioned.

Also, in our opinion, Tatiana Kolomiets, Russian scientist, overstates the assessment of dependence level of TV program brand from TV channel brand: “Each TV channel has its own TV program, which is broadcasting not only in daily or in night prime time, but in fact are being inseparable in the minds of the viewer with the image of the certain TV channel. Such programs are on the surface of consciousness and arise up in the memory of the respondents while the mention of the TV channel. It is the TV program brands which are an integral part of the TV channel’s image and, usually, collect a mass audience”¹⁹. Markus Schmidt, the German researcher, is largely shared this specified position. Analyzing the relationship between brands of TV channels and TV programs, he ascertains: «Brands of television channels have certain characteristics. TV brand consists of several sub-brands – brands of television programs. And because we’re talking about a number of software products, which have one thing in common – they are united by one TV channel. Thus, the brand of TV channel should serve as an umbrella for the whole set of different TV products”²⁰.

We can agree with the position of the mentioned experts about complex structure of TV brand system and close connection between brands of TV channels and TV programs. But, at the same time, the understanding of the meaning of TV channel brand, as a combination of TV program brands and relations between these brands – both between the whole and its parts, suggested by mentioned researches, causes some doubt. At least, such interplay cannot be considered as the only true for all TV channels and TV programs that are broadcasting on them.

¹⁵ Johnson, Catherine (2007). Tele-branding in TV III. The network as brand and the programme as brand. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 165.

¹⁶ Johnson, Catherine (2007). Tele-branding in TV III. The network as brand and the programme as brand. *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, 20.

¹⁷ Bryant, Andy. Long Live Channel Brands. <<http://www.redbeemedia.com/blog/long-live-channel-brands>>.

¹⁸ Sukhpreet, Singh. Building TV programme brands in the digital multi-channel world – perspectives of the UK television professionals. *Bournemouth*. <http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/12157/1/Building_Telev_Brands.pdf>.

¹⁹ Коломиец, Т. Программы-бренды телеканалов. <http://www.dv-reclama.ru/russia/analytics/tv/4236/_quot_video_interneshnl_quot_proekt_quot_televidenie_glazami_telezriteley_quot_2007_g>.

²⁰ Шмидт, М. Красота бренда — это стоимость. <<http://www.psychology.ru/library/142>>.

However, we can also argue that in not all cases brand of TV program stands as a sub-brand of TV channel brand. By David Aaker's definition: "sub-brand – is a brand that connected with the main (parent, umbrella) brand to enhance or modify the association of the main brand. The parent brand is the basis of reference, and its sub-brands are expanding, complementing association. The key role of sub-brands – extension of the main brand to the new segment"²¹. Thus, in our point of view, sub-brand is a brand that primarily supports, promotes and develops the parent brand. In some cases, brands of TV channel and TV program can be mutually independent.

As an example, that denies the necessity of implementation of TV program brand as a sub-brand of TV channel, can be the political TV talk show "Svoboda Slova" (eng. "Freedom of Speech") with the anchorman Savik Shuster. The program started with that name in September 2001 on the Russian TV channel "NTV", broadcasting there until 2004. In 2005 Savik Shuster's TV show of the same name – "Svoboda Slova" – moves to Ukraine, to the TV channel "ICTV". Later, this talk show broadcasted by another Ukrainian TV channel "Inter" and started out under the name "Svoboda by Savik Shuster" (eng. "Freedom by Savik Shuster"). According to experts, this TV program was copied of TV talk show "Freedom of speech" by all characteristics. We should note that TV talk show "Svoboda Slova" is still remains in the broadcasting of "ICTV" channel, but now with another TV anchorman²². In 2008 Shuster's political TV show had changed its name again, this time permanently, to "Shuster LIVE» and the Ukrainian TV channel "Ukraine" started to broadcast it. Then the TV channel "Ukraine" has issued intellectual ownership rights of trademark and service of "Shuster LIVE». Subsequently, this TV program had broadcasted on "The First National" channel. Then, it returned to the "Inter" channel, and then – again to the "The First National" channel.

The last "traditional" Ukrainian TV channel was the channel "24", which broadcasted the program "Shuster LIVE». After the official rupture of the contract by Savik Shuster with this TV channel, the program "Shuster LIVE» began to broadcast only on TV channel "112" and online portal Live.tv. Of course, "24" channel lost much of its audience²³.

Summing up and concisely defining the relationships between the analyzed TV program with different TV channels, which broadcasted it, we can reach the following conclusion. There is no objective reason to consider the TV program "Freedom of speech" ("Shuster LIVE») as a sub-brand of any of these channels. Rather, we are able to observe the relations that characterized the temporary cooperation of these brands.

Steve Morrison, well-known expert, one of the leaders of the American production group "All3Media", argues: "The rules of the game are changing, because TV viewers can determined with the brands of TV programs regardless of which TV channel will be broadcasting it"²⁴. We agree with this statement, because quite noticeable trends of the recent years in television infrastructure have become a redistribution of the functions from production of TV programs by TV channels to TV production studios.

Also, we should add, that in recent years the global TV market expands the practice of so-called syndication. According to the definition of Encyclopedia of American professional scientific and practical portal Museum of Broadcast Communications: "Syndication – is a practice of selling rights to broadcasting of television programs for more than one client, such as to television stations of cable channels or national broadcasting system. Syndication of television programs – is fundamental financial component of the television industry. Now syndications are very popular all over the world because for a long time they are remaining the decisive factor in the economy of television industry of the USA"²⁵.

Conclusions:

1. The article summarizes the results of analysis and concludes that brands of TV programs together with brands of TV channels play an important role in the functioning of television company' brand portfolio. They are closely interrelated and provide a noticeable impact on each other.

2. Objective grounds allow suggesting that the role of TV program brand in brand portfolio of a TV company has many different aspects. The role of brand in brand architecture of a TV company in some cases can be defined as a classic supporting sub-brand. Sometimes it means the cooperation (co-branding) between the brands of TV programs and TV channels. In particular, case needs further studying.

Further research, analysis and understanding the system of television brands – would be a prerequisite for successful and efficient operation of the television industry in general.

²¹ Аакер, Д.А. (2003). *Создание сильных брендов*. Москва: Издательский Дом Гребенникова, 124.

²² Душевский, Г. Очень шустрый Савик. <http://www.telekritika.ua/daidzhest/2008-07-29/39707?theme_page=10>.

²³ Последние выпуски программы "Шустер LIVE" только на Liveam.tv <http://liveam.tv/shuster-live.html>.

²⁴ Bryant, Andy. Long Live Channel Brands. <<http://www.redbeemedia.com/blog/long-live-channel-brands>>.

²⁵ Syndication. In *Museum of broadcast communications*. <<http://www.museum.tv/eotv/syndication.htm>>.

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