

## THE IMPACT OF LOGISTICS AND MARKETING CUSTOMER SERVICE ON COURIER SERVICES

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**Purpose:** The aim of the study was to analyze the importance of logistics and customer service marketing in courier services on the DHL platform. In addition, the scale of influence of the marketing of the courier company in question on consumer decisions is suspicious.

**Design/methodology/approach:** The choice fell on the survey as a research method that gave the opportunity to analyze the researched problems from different perspectives, dealing with many issues at the same time, and also through the possibility of reaching more people from the research group.

**Findings:** It has been shown that activities related to logistics and marketing customer service are very important for the functioning of a courier company and achieving success in this industry.

**Originality/value:** The publication covers the subject of impact of logistics and marketing customer service on courier services. Combining interdisciplinary research in the areas of management and quality science with economics and finance.

**Keywords:** courier services, logistic customer service, internet marketing.

**Category of the paper:** case study.

### 1. Introduction

The market of courier, express and parcel companies is constantly developing and expanding, making them more and more efficient and effective. There is a noticeable increase in courier services provided in Poland in 2012-2017 and an increase in the value of these companies by 53%, which is about 3% of the total share in the European market. The increase in value is considered lower than the increase in quantity, which is 62%, because the average prices of courier services in Poland are almost half lower than the prices on the European market. The dominant factor is lower costs resulting from the employment of employees in Poland (Fachner, Szyszk, 2018). There are several types of companies providing CEP services in Poland. These are (Gulc, 2017):

- companies that operate internationally, with almost all countries in the world and have many branches; they mainly concern the shipment of express and parcel shipments, moreover, the services offered, due to the distance between countries, differ in the time and cost of delivery; both the European and the global market is dominated by large international corporations, e.g. DHL, TNT FedEx, UPS, which offer integrated services based on the guarantee of timely delivery of the shipment, shipment tracking and full implementation of the delivery process, including customs clearance; among international deliveries, and mainly intercontinental, air transport is used most of all, and rail or road transport is rarely used,
- companies operating mainly in Europe, e.g. GLS, DPD, the method of delivery is air and road transport, due to the development and convenient access to road networks in Europe,
- companies that operate only in the country where they thrive thanks to a developed network of national branches, including Opek, Siódemka, are primarily standardized express and parcel shipments,
- regional companies operating in a given region, e.g. in the province are served by smaller operators, which means that both the supplier and the recipient know each other personally, which positively affects urgent and valuable deliveries,
- enterprises operating on the local market, which often cooperate with companies from the previously mentioned groups, e.g. Sprinter; not only vans are used, but also motorcycles, scooters and bicycles for short distances,
- specialized companies that target a specific group of recipients in their activities.

In order to offer the right quality of courier services, there are a number of elements that affect optimization and customer satisfaction. This group includes offering unified services, fast delivery of parcels, individual approach to the client by adapting the services offered to the needs of clients, delivery of parcels on the agreed date and a high level of services provided (Rucińska, 2016; Uvet, 2020).

## **2. Motivation and purpose**

Logistics and marketing management are related by the law of two concepts, i.e. logistics, which is an area of management focusing on flows, and marketing, which refers to the market concept of enterprise management. Both concepts have the same common point, which is the market that determines sales and supplies. The modern market and its development are closely related to the logistics and marketing process. These two areas are of strategic importance in the company and affect the integration of the supply chain and the system of creating value for the customer and enterprises (Majchrzak-Lepczyk, 2014). Thus, marketing and logistics form

a dual concept and subsystem of an integrated enterprise management system. This means that both logistics and marketing are equally included in the concept of enterprise management and are equally important in the functional spheres and integrated processes in the enterprise. At the same time, it allows to define the scope and process of integration and creation of a value system, i.e. in the area of operational, strategic and normative management, as well as the phase of strategic analysis of the situation, development of tactics, implementation of logistics and marketing plans (Blaik et al., 2005).

Customer service is a company-customer relationship based on mutual requirements in the context of the company. This means that the client wants to take advantage of the benefits of this from using a service or product and expects quality for what he paid for (Majchrzak-Lepczyk, 2015). Also, the customer expects that if they are not satisfied enough, the company will fix it. To offer the highest level of service, the company should offer the customer favorable financial and credit terms, deliver the product within the specified period, maintain the level of spare parts stock, provide promotional materials, provide flexible and safe service, collect and fulfill orders and visit customers (Wojciechowski, 2012).

In the context of marketing, customer service refers to the professionalism of sellers, quality assurance and activities that affect sales and customer satisfaction. This action also takes into account the financial aspect, which focuses on the terms of payment, with logistics allowing for an efficient flow of goods, and customer service understood as "the ability of the logistics system to meet the needs of buyers in terms of time, reliability, communication and convenience" (Stawiarska, 2012) or "the manner, place and time of offering the company's products along with detailed rules and forms of order fulfillment" (Kramarz, 2015).

In order to set customer service standards, various activities related to strategic logistics activities are undertaken. In order to improve them, customer service research and analysis are used, such elements as customer expectations as to the level at which the service is to be offered compared to the competition, the relationship between the costs resulting from the change in the level of service and the value of sales and market share, and the compliance of the logistics strategy with the marketing strategy, as well as the forms used to implement the company's global strategy (Rutkowski, 2005).

The relationship between marketing and logistics is strategic for all modern companies, which increases the awareness of enterprises in this area (Szydełko, 2012). An important element of enterprise management is also logistics and related activities. The most effective way to combine these two groups is to develop a logistics strategy that should take into account the concepts of marketing strategy related to the product, price and promotional activities from the perspective of using distribution channels (Łukasik et al., 2016; Ejdyś, Gulc, 2020).

### 3. Methodology

Logistics and marketing support for a large international company like DHL comes with many challenges. There are several other courier companies on the market that compete with DHL. It is important how DHL works, what are its logistics services and the use of marketing to maintain the level of its services and constantly win new customers. The above considerations prompted the authors to address the topic of the importance of logistics and marketing customer service in courier services, and therefore the following research questions were posed:

1. What determines the respondent's decision to choose courier services?
2. Do the respondents believe that marketing of logistics services is necessary?
3. Do respondents believe that DHL marketing influences the customer and his decision to use the services offered?
4. How are DHL services rated compared to other courier services?
5. What are DHL ads characterized by?
6. In what form do people like to receive advertising?
7. What do respondents say is the reason for DHL's success?

Based on the research questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. The decision to choose courier services depends on the quality of services and price.
2. Respondents believe that marketing of logistics services is needed.
3. The survey participants believe that DHL marketing influences the customer and his decision to use the services offered.
4. Compared to other courier companies, DHL services are rated better.
5. Respondents describe DHL ads as interesting, encouraging and effective.
6. Participants of the study like to deal with advertisements on the Internet.
7. According to the respondents, the low price is the reason for DHL's success.

The survey was conducted in December 2021 only in electronic form. The research tool used to verify the hypotheses was a questionnaire. It was decided to use a survey as a research method, which gave the opportunity to analyze the researched problems from different perspectives, dealing with many issues at the same time, and also thanks to the possibility of reaching a large number of people from the research group. Using Google Forms, a virtual version of the survey was created, which contained 26 questions. The survey is part of a separate study.

The purpose of creating this tool was to prove the presented hypotheses and to present marketing at DHL - a logistics company dealing with courier services. DHL was founded in 1969 by Adrian Dalsey, Larry Hillblom and Robert Lynn. DHL is considered a world leader in the logistics industry. The company employs approximately 400,000 people in over 220 countries. In their work, they help clients grow, cross borders and discover new markets every

day, and send letters to loved ones. Approximately 1,614,000,000 parcels are delivered annually. DHL offers parcel and document shipments domestically and internationally, international air transport and same-day delivery, international sea transport, domestic, pan-European and worldwide road and rail transport within Europe and between Europe and Asia and direct shipments to various companies on an international level (DHL, O nas, 2023).

#### 4. Results

The research sample that took part in the study consisted of 105 people: 65 women and 40 men. This shows that there were more women than men in the study group. Most respondents were aged 26-40 (39%), then 41-55 (26.7%), then 18-25 (18.1%). The penultimate, least numerous group were people under 18 (12.4%), and the smallest group were people over 55 (3.8%). According to the obtained results, the largest group were inhabitants of rural areas (49.5%), followed by inhabitants of cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. residents. people (23.8%), later in the city up to 50 thousand. inhabitants (16.2%), and the least numerous group were people living in a city with a population of 50,000. - 100 thousand inhabitants (10.5%). In the question about education, most people indicated that they had higher education (45.7%), a slightly smaller group were people with secondary/vocational education (42.9%), then primary (7.6%), and the least numerous group were people with lower secondary education (3.8%). The largest group of respondents declared an average net income in inhabited households above PLN 2,000 (64.4%), a smaller group of people with income in the range of PLN 1,001-1,500 (13.9%) and PLN 1,501-2,000 (9.9%). Next was the group of people with an income of PLN 501-1000 (6.8%), and the smallest group with an income of PLN 500 (5%).

In response to the question "Where did you first encounter the term logistics?" the largest group were people who came across this term at school (56.2%), then former respondents who came across this term at work (20%), then in the press/television (10.5%) and on the Internet (9.5%). Of the smallest groups have never encountered this term (3%), the smallest group of people were people who came across the term "logistics" for the first time in scientific literature (0.8%). The next question concerned obtaining information whether a given person used it from logistics services. Most people (76.2%) answered this question in the affirmative. A smaller part of the answers (23.8%) was the group that had never used logistics services. After the respondents answered the question "What logistics services do you use?" most respondents admitted that from transport services (83.4%). Other services (23.5%) were ranked next. A smaller group were people using forwarding services (20%), and the smallest group were warehousing services.

The next question was: "How often do you use courier services?". The most common answer was several times a month, then several times a year (27.6%). A smaller group consisted of people answering once a month (9.5%), several times a week (8.6%) and once a week (8.6%). The least numerous group were people who answered that they do not use these services (1.9%). In the next question "What determines your decision when choosing courier services?" more than one answer could be selected. A significant proportion of respondents answered that their choice depends on the delivery time (71.4%) and the price of the service (65.7%). It was followed by the quality of services (44.8%), reliability (29.5%) and good opinion among friends and other customers (21.9%). The fewest people admitted that they are guided by the company's marketing when choosing (5.7%).

In the question "For what purpose do you use courier services?" respondents could select several answers. The largest group were people collecting the parcel (82.9%). Almost half of the respondents answered that they regularly shop online (50.5%). A smaller group were people sending parcels in this way (41.9%), and the least numerous group was saving time for self-delivery/collection of the product (31.4%). The next question concerned obtaining an answer to the question of what the respondents think about the quality of courier services in Poland compared to other EU countries. The largest part is the answer that they provide services at a high level (40%). Then the answer was that they were of medium quality (31.4%) and had no opinion on the subject, because the respondent did not know the industry in question (28.6%). None of the respondents indicated that courier services in Poland are of low quality.

The answer to the question "Have you used the DHL courier company?" there was an affirmative answer (84.8%), only a percentage of respondents answered that they had never used DHL services. Another question for people using DHL courier services is why they chose this company. They respond in their responses based on the criteria: Low Price, Random, Fast Delivery, No Specific Option, Company Trust, Trust, Company, and No Service Provider Selection. The question regarding the use of courier services other than DHL indicated that almost all respondents use the services of another company (96.2%), only a small percentage of users used DHL services only (3.8%). The next question also concerns the use of the services of companies, it was related to the question about the use of courier companies other than DHL and asked the respondents to indicate which companies they used and could receive more than one answer. The largest group of people using InPost services (89.2%), including DPD (84.3%), UPS (54.9%), GLS (48%) and FedEx (41.2%). A smaller group of people were customers of Geis (10.8%) and Raben (7.8%). The least frequent answer was MEEEST (2%).

In the next question, the respondents were to answer the question whether marketing of logistics services is needed. The vast majority of people admitted that it is needed (77.1%). A smaller group were people who had no opinion on the importance of marketing in logistics (16.2%). The fewest answers were given to a negative statement on a given topic (6.7%). The next question was: "How do you rate DHL's services overall compared to other courier services?". The vast majority of people answered that it is difficult to say (74.3%). The next

group in terms of the number of answers was "it's better" (18.1%). The lowest percentage was obtained by the answers "it is worse", "it is much worse" and "it is much better". The next question concerned marketing and the form in which the respondents most like to receive (watch, read, listen to) advertisements. Most people said that they like to do it online (29.8%) and in any form (27.9%). Subsequently, the same number of votes was cast for the answer that in any form (15.4%) and television advertising (15.4%). Print advertising was one of the least popular answers (9.6%), and radio advertising was the least popular. The next question concerned the effectiveness of marketing of courier services in Poland according to the respondents. Half of the respondents answered that it was moderately effective (50%), slightly fewer people said that it was effective and influenced the willingness to use the services. The least numerous group were respondents who admitted that marketing is ineffective and does not affect the willingness to use the service (3.8%).

Respondents were then asked if they had ever seen an advertisement for DHL services. Most people said they had seen it (42.3%), slightly fewer people said they were not sure (40.4%). The fewest people answered that they had never seen a DHL advertisement (17.3%). The next question concerned people who had seen DHL ads and those people were asked how they would describe the ads of a given courier company. Respondents could select several answers. Most people admitted that DHL ads are interesting (33.3%), followed by encouraging (31.7%), effective (21.7%), boring (16.7%), pleasant (15%) and ineffective (13.3%). The fewest responses were that they were eye-catching (6.7%), funny (3.3%), discouraging (3.3%), creative (1.7%) and unique (1.7%). None of the people surveyed found DHL's ads emotional or irritating. One of the last questions was whether respondents believe that DHL marketing influences the customer and their decision to use the services offered. The majority of responses were positive (45.2%), followed by abstentions and no opinion on the question (44.2%). The fewest people answered that they disagreed with this statement (10.6%). The next question was to get feedback on why respondents thought DHL was successful. Respondents could select more than one answer. The majority of people answered that the quality of the service affects it (59.8%). The next group consisted of people who believed that good organization in the company (34%), low price (28.9%) and marketing (20.6%) had an impact. The fewest people answered that these are factors other than those mentioned earlier (19.6%). The last question concerned whether the surveyed person would recommend DHL services to another person. More than half of people admitted that they would recommend DHL services (55.8%), a smaller percentage of people who had no opinion (39.4%). The smallest group were people who would not recommend DHL services (4.8%).

After analyzing the data and taking into account the respondents' opinions, it can be concluded that the logistics and marketing of customer service is an important element noticed by current and potential customers. Respondents are aware of what logistics and marketing are and what these areas deal with. The respondents are satisfied with the level of DHL services,

but they also used the services of other logistics companies. Most of the respondents were familiar with DHL's advertisements and rated them as positive and effective.

According to the research results obtained, almost all hypotheses were confirmed, except for the last one, which was not proven.

The first of the hypotheses was that the decision to choose courier services depends on the quality of services and the price. For this purpose, a question was asked in the survey "What determines the respondent's decision in choosing courier services?". The obtained results clearly show that these elements play an important role.

Another research question concerned whether marketing is needed in logistics services. According to the hypothesis, marketing in logistics is important and necessary. For verification, the question "Do you think that marketing of logistics services is necessary?" was asked. Marketing activities in logistics are important and over 3/4 of respondents agree with this statement.

Another research question concerned whether DHL marketing affects the customer and his decision to use the services offered. The hypothesis that DHL marketing influences the customer and his decision to use the services offered has been confirmed.

According to the fourth hypothesis, the services offered by DHL are better than other courier services. For verification, the question "How are DHL services rated compared to other courier services?" The response received directly indicated that DHL and the services offered by this company are better than those that can be obtained from other companies in the logistics industry.

Another hypothesis was that DHL's ads were interesting, enticing and effective. For verification purposes, the question "What are the characteristics of DHL advertisements?" was asked. The results obtained showed that the majority of respondents found DHL's advertisements interesting, encouraging and effective, so the hypothesis was confirmed.

Another hypothesis was that the favorite form and place to receive advertisements is the Internet. For verification, the question "In what form do people like to receive advertising?" was asked. Most of the answers concerned advertising on the Internet, which confirmed another hypothesis.

The latter assumed that the low price was the reason for DHL's success. The question asked "What do respondents think is the reason for DHL's success?" allowed to conclude that not the price, but the quality of services affects the success of the company. The second place among the success factors was good organization in the company, and only the third place was the price of the services offered. The hypothesis was not confirmed, however, the question showed that the price of services also plays an important role, as this answer was in the top three most popular answers.

It has been shown that activities related to logistics and marketing customer service are very important for the functioning of a logistics company and achieving success in this field. The aim of the research was to show the importance of activities related to logistics and



marketing customer service for courier services. Effectiveness achieved through the use of appropriate tools allows you to reach various customer groups, encourage them to use the services, recommend them to others and be a loyal and engaged customer.

## 5. Conclusions

Logistics and marketing are departments that exist in symbiosis. These departments need to support each other and put the customer first. Employees should remember that the most important resource and element influencing the company is the customer. It is the customer that enables the existence and guarantees the future of the company and the workplace. This approach is related to get information about how employees approach the customer. They should read and evaluate your approach, opinion, and ask a series of questions to help determine your audience and direction. Such questions in the marketing of logistics companies and customer service include: whether high standards of delivery time standards are set and whether they are strictly observed, whether innovative ideas in the area of customer service are collected and actions are taken to implement them, whether competent and kind people are employed for customer service who will quickly, effectively and efficiently answer all questions, consider complaints and solve problems.

Effective and efficient functioning of companies would not be successful without the appropriate quality of services, such as timely deliveries, affordable price, reliability or good opinion among customers. Appropriate effective actions allow you to stand out from the competition, retain customers and acquire new ones.

In order to arouse more interest among recipients of logistics services, logistics companies should use appropriate marketing. Most often, segmentation and positioning of logistics services, marketing communication and, above all, such methods as promotion, advertising, personal selling and public relations are used to achieve this goal. Logistics companies shape their own image and identity.

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