

Розділ 3. Прикладні соціокомунікаційні технології

Part 3. Applied Communication Technologies

■ [https://doi.org/10.31516/2410-5333.062.09¹](https://doi.org/10.31516/2410-5333.062.09<sup>1</sup)

УДК 005.71-021.131:004

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VIRTUAL MANAGERS AS BRANDING TOOLS

The problems of the virtual manager as a tool for gaining trust in brands are studied, taking into account its capabilities. The functions and communication capabilities of chatbots are described. Based on the conducted survey, statistics were obtained on the growing role of virtual communication between brands and consumers of their products and services. The results of the survey showed that users prefer using chatbots in Telegram and Viber. It is justified that the growth of the role of virtual communication between brands and consumers of their products and services not only determines the demand for the introduction of chatbots in communication with the target audience, but also allows considering the chatbot as an important tool for building trust in the brand.

Keywords: *social networks, virtual managers, chatbots, communications, PR communications, brand, branding, trust, positive image.*

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ВІРТУАЛЬНІ МЕНЕДЖЕРИ ЯК ІНСТРУМЕНТИ БРЕНДИНГУ

Актуальність. Брендінг та комунікації нерозривно пов'язані. PR-комунікації активно використовуються відомими брендами, які формують власний позитивний імідж продукту чи послуги. Нині, в умовах обмеженої офлайн-комунікації, головною комунікативною платформою для брендінгу є мережа Інтернет. Особливої актуальності останнім часом набули технології комунікацій, основані на месенджерах і чат-ботах. Розвиток цих програмних засобів привів до того, що нині в режимі реального часу через інтернет можна відправляти як текстову

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інформацію, так аудіо- і відеоповідомлення. Зручність використання чат-ботів полягає в тому, що вони доступні передусім як у самому месенджері, так і в соціальних мережах. Саме чат-боти в мобільних пристроях на один крок ближче до цільової аудиторії бренду, ніж сам мобільний додаток, і на два кроки ближче, ніж вебсайт торгової марки. У цьому контексті актуальності набуває аналіз використання чат-ботів у бренд-комунікаціях та використання цього інструменту для завоювання довіри до бренду.

За останній рік чат-боти стали надзвичайно популярними. Експерти прогнозують грандіозне зростання використання чат-ботів у найближчі кілька років і пов'язують це із мегапопулярністю соціальних мереж та додатків до них. Для багатьох компаній впровадження чат-ботів стало одним з засобів підвищення ефективності бізнесу. Telegram, Viber, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp — це також бізнес-платформи, які надають змоги використовувати віртуальні менеджери, щоб досягти нового рівня спілкування з клієнтами.

Мета статті. Метою статті є аналіз використання віртуальних менеджерів, як інструментів завоювання довіри до брендів з урахуванням їх комунікативних можливостей.

Методологія. Для виконання дослідження використано аналітичний метод, методи опису, зіставлення та узагальнення.

Результати. Описано функції та комунікативні можливості чат-ботів. На основі проведеного опитування отримано статистику про зростання ролі віртуальної комунікації між брендами та споживачами їхніх продуктів і послуг. Результати опитування продемонстрували, що користувачі надають перевагу використанню чат-ботів у Telegram та Viber. Обґрунтовано, що зростання ролі віртуальної комунікації між брендами та споживачами їх продуктів і послуг не лише зумовлює попит на впровадження чат-ботів у спілкування з цільовою аудиторією, а й дозволяє розглядати чат-бот як важливий інструмент формування довіри до бренду.

Новизна. На основі проведеного опитування та отриманої статистики проаналізовано основні комунікативні особливості використання чат-ботів як інструментів збільшення лояльності до брендів.

Практичне значення. Матеріали та висновки дослідження можна використовувати для вдосконалення комунікаційної стратегії в брендингу та іміджуванні.

Висновки. У сучасному світі успішний маркетинг безпосередньо залежить від ефективного використання всього спектра бренд-комунікацій. Проте чим більше нових технологій практикують у комунікаціях, тим більшої актуальності набуває психологічна складова та індивідуальний підхід. На основі проведеного опитування можемо висновувати про те, що практика комунікації через чат-бот відома більшості українських користувачів. Відповідно до статистики, 61,3% осіб вважають, що чат-бот здатен впливати на репутацію бренду. 77,5% респондентів відзначають, що в спілкуванні за допомогою віртуальних менеджерів, використовуючи емодіки, фрази ввічливості та комунікаційні стратегії мотивації до наступних дій, не лише підтримується емоційний зв'язок, а формується почуття прихильності та довіри до торгової марки, бренду чи організації. Отже, завдяки глибоко продуманій комунікаційній стратегії з використанням чат-боту репутація бренду поліпшується, оскільки клієнт отримує відповідь миттєво, що сприяє ефективній комунікації та задоволенні індивідуальних запитів користувачів.

Ключові слова: соціальні мережі, віртуальні менеджери, чат-боти, комунікації, PR-комунікації, бренд, брендинг, довіра, позитивний імідж.

Formulation of the problem. An essential condition for effective development is advanced technologies that can simplify and make the environment more convenient for people. Over the past few years, we can observe remarkable communication between artificial intelligence and humans. Virtual managers (chatbots) are an example of such cooperation. Through virtual managers, the process of communication of brands with the target audience takes place. PR communications are actively used by well-known brands that form their positive image and at the same time influence the value priorities of society through the presentation of certain personal qualities, subject properties, lifestyle, etc. In this context, the analysis of the use of chatbots in brand communications and the use of this tool to gain brand trust becomes relevant. Chatbots have become very popular over the past year. Experts predict enormous growth in the use of chatbots in the next few years and associate this boom with the mega-popularity of social networks and their applications. For many companies, the introduction of chatbots has become one of the means of increasing business efficiency. Telegram, Viber, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp are also business platforms that allow you to use virtual managers to reach a new level of communication with customers.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The problems of researching branding on the Internet and in social networks are of interest to many foreign and Ukrainian scientists in the field of social communications, marketing and psychology. In the context of our research, the works of N. Bezrukova and L. Tymchenko (2014), O. Yarmoliuk, Y. Fisun, A. Shapovalova (2020), N. Khymytsia, and K. Petryk (2021) are relevant. Relevant are the studies in which the main attention is focused on the socialization aspect of branding. In the conditions of a highly competitive market environment, it is very important to practice modern communication technologies, to change the communication strategy of the brand, to appeal to the values and emotions of the target audience for the promotion and success of the brand. This issue was studied by Ukrainian and foreign researchers A. Badin, A. Levitas, O. Repiev, V. Tamberg, L. Havkina and others.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the use of virtual managers as a tool for gaining trust in brands, taking into account their communicative capabilities.

Introduction of main material. A few years ago, it was difficult to imagine that artificial intelligence could be used in all corners of the world, but today it has become a reality. Thanks to virtual managers, it is possible to significantly facilitate the work of employees and save costs for entrepreneurs. For customers and brand supporters, communication through a chatbot is:

- the ability to satisfy a need thanks to instant feedback

- the possibility of choosing a convenient communication channel,
- the possibility of prompt communication with the company
- the possibility of solving the problem in one channel
- personalized communication – no need to re-clarify information about yourself and the subject of previous contacts
- relevant and detailed information on the issue.

The first chatbot was created in 1966 by Joseph Weizenbaum, who wrote the Eliza program. This chatbot was the first virtual manager, after which its rapid spread and introduction into human work took place.

In the XXI century, a bot is a virtual program that is configured to automatically communicate with the user. By its functionality, the bot resembles a robot that performs mechanical operations according to a given algorithm. The program performs repetitive monotonous actions quickly and clearly, which exceeds the capabilities of an ordinary person (“REPUTATION REQUIRES TIME AND EFFORT, BUT THE RESULT IS WORTH IT”, – SVITLANA LIUBCHENKO).

Bots perform various functions, the most popular of which is the promotion of advertisements. They can show the weather or answer questions from users on company websites. They are used to distribute and popularize online stores or profiles in social networks. However, in conditions of increasing importance of online communications between brands and the target audience, the role of all aspects of the use of virtual managers is increasing, and in particular as tools for forming a positive impression and gaining trust.

To study this issue, a survey of active users of the Ukrainian Internet space was conducted. The survey showed that today every second Ukrainian has had the experience of communicating through a chatbot (Fig. 1).

This testifies to the rapid use of virtual manager tools in society and provides an opportunity to master the latest technologies with benefit to oneself. Thanks to this implementation, the user significantly saves his own time and savings. Moreover, the introduction of the latest technologies stimulates society to master new offers and develop, reducing the risk of population degradation. Humanity always strives for an easier life, and on this path, the most effective is the use of robots, which today are quite capable of providing the necessary information quickly and simply.

Statistics confirm the popularity of chatbots in the Ukrainian market. According to the obtained results, 97.5% of the respondents practice communicating through chatbots (Fig. 2).

According to the results of the survey, 46.3% of respondents have experience using chatbots once a month. Instead, 32.5% of people use a chatbot once a week (Fig. 2). This indicates that the virtual manager is

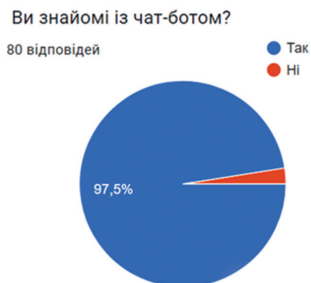


Fig. 1. Indicator of people's awareness of the virtual manager

Як часто Ви використовуєте чат-бот?

80 відповідей

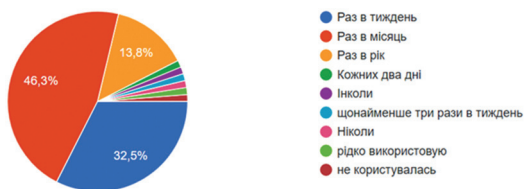


Fig. 2. Indicator of communication with the bot

Спілкування через чат-бот, збільшило Вашу прихильність до марки, бренду, послуги чи навпаки

80 відповідей

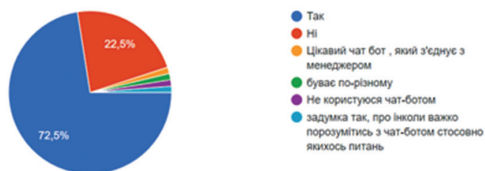


Fig. 3. Brand loyalty rating

Чи під силу чат-боту підтримати емоційний зв'язок споживача з продуктом?

80 відповідей

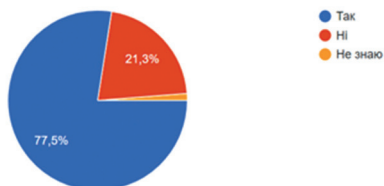


Fig. 4. Indicator of maintaining an emotional connection through a chatbot

Чи впливає чат-бот на репутацію фірми?

80 відповідей

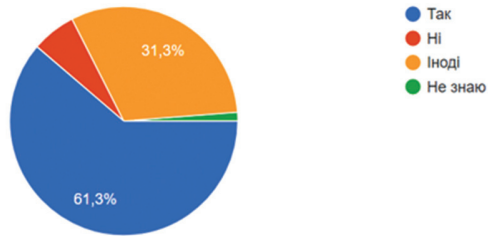


Fig. 5. Indicator of the influence of the chatbot on the company's reputation

Оцініть від 0-10 емоційне забарвлення чат-боту (ввічливість, використання емоджі)

80 відповідей

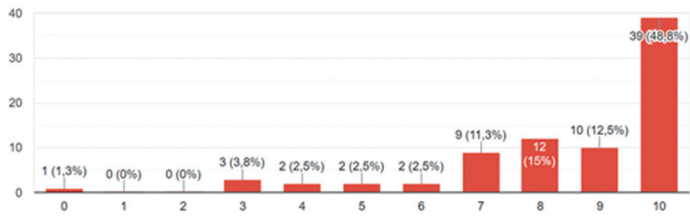


Fig. 6. Evaluation of the emotional color of the chatbot

Оцініть від 0 -10 швидкість отримання інформації за допомогою чат-боту

80 відповідей

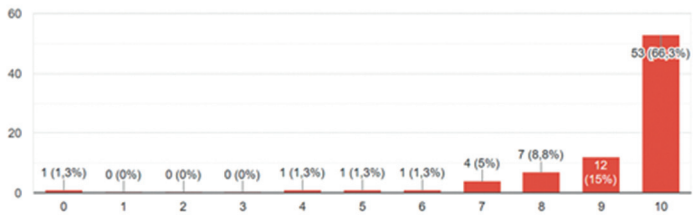


Fig. 7. The result of evaluating the speed of obtaining information

widely used and is part of the habit of using it to meet needs in this or that area. It covers the basic needs of the user instantly. And, if the user's problem is solved, it doesn't really matter who is sitting on the other side of the screen — a bot or a human.

The growing role of virtual communication between brands and consumers of their products and services not only determines the demand for the introduction of chatbots in communication with the target audience, but also allows considering the chatbot as an important tool for building trust in the brand.

The survey showed (Fig. 3) that 72.5% of users increased their loyalty to a brand, service. This figure can grow over time, and the remaining 22.5% may change their mind. It is known that the buyer wants to get what he wants as quickly and qualitatively as possible. For this, the chatbot can simplify the selection and payment method of this product. The faster the user receives an answer, the more his need and interest in this company, brand etc. will grow. This stimulates the user to give positive feedback, and makes the company competitive. It is, so to speak, a game of speed, the one who gave feedback the fastest and provided high-quality communication with the client, won. A chatbot enables a brand to cover the Internet space, and this affects the factor of trust in a person and popularization of a product or service.

The result shows (Fig. 4) that 77.5% of people believe that a chatbot is capable of supporting an emotional connection. Emotional connection is built on reciprocity between the user and the interlocutor. Succinct and accurate communication affects further interaction. Connection must be mutual, otherwise, this connection will not exist. It is the chatbot that is an intermediary between the consumer and the product, which can communicate and create an emotional connection in the user. Because your needs match, meaning the consumer wants an answer, the chatbot provides it instead. Here there is a mutual discussion that forms a connection.

Figure 5 shows the indicators of the impact of the chatbot on the company's reputation. According to statistics, 61.3% of people believe that a chatbot can influence reputation. The remaining 31.3% believe that not always. Business reputation has its value, which is called goodwill (it is an intangible asset, the value of which is determined as the difference between the market price and the book value of the assets of the enterprise as a whole property complex, which arises as a result of using better management qualities, a dominant position on the market of goods, services, new technologies, etc.). In general, there are several definitions of the term "reputation", but the most important meaning of this phenomenon is that reputation is what people think about you, not what you think about yourself. Reputation is

the most important intangible asset and one of the most effective factors in attracting new customers (*“REPUTATION REQUIRES TIME AND EFFORT, BUT THE RESULT IS WORTH IT”*, – SVITLANA LYUBCHENKO). Building a reputation is a long process, so communication using a chatbot must contribute to a positive impression of the brand. For the reputation to grow, it is necessary to take into account the whole complex of communicative factors, and first of all – the chatbot’s ability to maximally individualize the conversation with the user. It can be in voice or text mode. Also, it is especially important to take into account the emotional coloring through the analysis of the user’s communication and mood.

One of the key factors of communication interaction is understanding. The program can make sense of human requests, namely extract the context, mood, and understanding of the direction of the conversation.

Cooperation is also an important factor in optimizing online communication. The bot can constantly learn, and correctly process user requests based on the experience of other data sources and devices. This is what causes a person to trust the brand, and this has a significant impact on the reputation.

The statistics of the conducted survey (Fig. 6) show that 48.8% of people evaluate the use of emojis by a chatbot as a manifestation of politeness.

The bot should be polite but concise. In the chat, the client wants to receive a quick and simple solution, and if there is no such solution, it is necessary to transfer it to a live operator. The bot should look human, but only up to a certain level. Traditional solutions: give the bot a name, write him lines in a certain style and give them a certain emotional color, depending on the scenario. However, the user must clearly understand that he is communicating with a bot, and not with a live operator, to prevent unpleasant situations (Myrnaia, 2021).

The result of the evaluation showed (Fig. 7) that 66.3% of the respondents claim that they are satisfied with the quick work of the chatbot for processing information. If the human factor can be the reason for the long-term response, then the virtual employee can instantly process the customer’s request and respond to it either in the chat on the website or in any other messenger. Thus, the chatbot can reduce costs and the burden of the company’s operators by taking on routine tasks. Moreover, the virtual manager can communicate with several participants at once, and the speed of information processing will be the same. The availability of work for a chatbot is 24/7, which is a big advantage over the human factor.

The results of the survey showed that 81.3% of users prefer using a chatbot in Telegram because it is easy and convenient to communicate between a bot and a person there (Fig. 8).

У якому додатку Вам найзручніше використовувати чат-бот?

80 відповідей

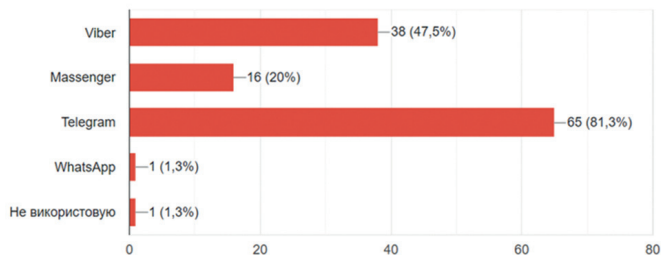


Fig. 8. Rating of the most convenient applications for using a chatbot

Ваша сфера використання чат-боту

29 відповідей

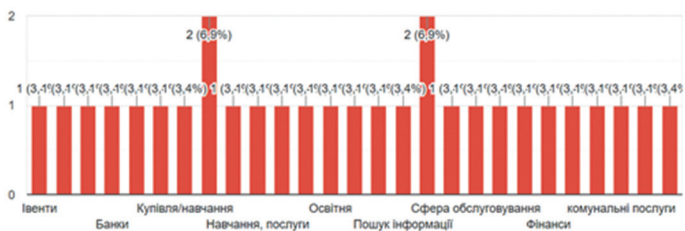


Fig. 9. Rating of current areas of use of chatbots

Чи задовільнив Ваші сподівання чат-бот у роботі

80 відповідей

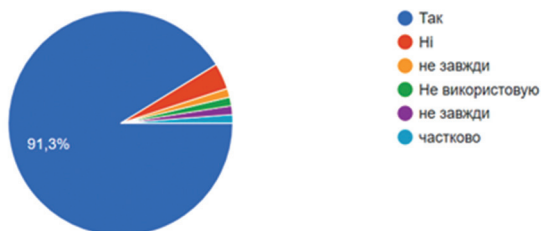


Fig. 10. The result of the evaluation of expectations in the work of the chatbot

Telegram is a popular messenger for exchanging messages, and media files, creating groups, and making calls. Here, bots interact with customers, answer their questions, and offer products and payment/delivery methods.

As for Viber, only 47.5% of respondents prefer this application. Viber bots are used for the same purposes as on other sites. The specifics of the Viber chatbot are that this virtual manager can answer questions, translate text, send images, and many other operations (OtvetChtoTakoe (2022)). In general, Viber-bots is used for: online consultations; organization of service mailings; interaction with customers. Ukrainian users use chatbots in other applications (Messenger, WhatsApp) more for private communication.

According to the survey, the field of use is dominated by education and work (Fig. 9). These are two relevant fields that are used daily. In addition to answering standard questions, chatbots can motivate learning. For example, the Norwegian bot Differ sends useful articles to students or invites them to participate in a discussion. It is necessary not only to acquire knowledge but also to be able to use it. However, practical tasks are often not given enough time in the learning process. All efforts, as a rule, are aimed at filling the student with information. Bots will be able to give students tasks, prompt them to solve them and evaluate the result.

The study showed (Fig. 10) that 91.3% of respondents were satisfied with the use of the chatbot. Clarity, concise presentation of information, speed of work and 24/7 availability are appreciated. An equally important point is safety. Chatbots recognize illegal activity and fraud faster than a live person. Scammers in this area usually start the conversation by introducing themselves on behalf of the other person. Chatbots provide clarifying information and compare it with information in the profile or on external resources. Also, bots can check IP addresses, detect inconsistencies and alert the financial service provider about a suspicious transaction (Why a bot serves a bank client better than a person).

Conclusions. In today's world, successful marketing directly depends on the effective use of the entire range of brand communications. However, the more new technologies are practiced in communications, the more relevant the psychological component and individual approach become. Based on the conducted survey, we can conclude that the practice of communication through a chatbot is known to the majority of Ukrainian users. According to statistics, 61.3% of people believe that a chatbot can influence brand reputation. 77.5% of respondents note that in communication with the help of virtual managers, through the use of emoticons, phrases of politeness, and communication strategies of motivation for further actions, not only emotional connection is maintained, but also a feeling of attachment and trust in a trademark, brand or organization is formed. Therefore, with a well-

thought-out communication strategy using a chatbot, the brand reputation is improved, as the customer receives an answer instantly, which facilitates effective communication and satisfying individual user requests.

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Надійшла до редколегії 01.09.2022