

## STEALTH MARKETING STRATEGY – ORIGINS, MANIFESTATIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION

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**Abstract:** *Stealth marketing has been witnessing growing recognition during the last decade. However, the results from its application remain a daunting task for marketers as they cannot be measured accurately given that such campaigns are very rarely disclosed. The aim of this article is to present the contemporary manifestations of stealth marketing strategies by also contrasting them to its predecessor – viral marketing. The paper presents an original author model of stealth marketing and distinguishes it from other forms of surreptitious marketing strategies. At the end of the paper a new understanding of the traditional marketing mix is presented taking the stealth marketing perspective.*

**Keywords:** *stealth marketing, viral marketing, stealth marketing strategies*

### Overview of the challenges and circumstances predisposing the design of new marketing strategies

With the growing demands of customers as a result of increased price transparency and extending product ranges, marketing managers are challenged to meet customer expectations in a way effective and more precise. Companies face the contemporary saturation of markets, which establishes more exigent circumstances as related to their ability to shine through the promotional clutter. Among the major circumstances shaping the need for new types and forms of marketing strategies are: (1) lack of effectiveness of traditional advertising and (2) blurring of customer segments. On the one hand, traditional advertising showers customers with myriad messages with commercial intention, which has resulted in „blocking behavior“. Nowadays, customers try to circumvent advertising (especially online) and boycott companies that interrupt their everyday life<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, modern segmentation faces some key challenges related to market dynamism. Rapid changes in customer needs are prone to making segments unbalanced and unsteady<sup>2</sup>. Then again, the fragmentation of segments becomes more apparent with the growth of communication channels that attract smaller groups of customers thereby making the reach of specific mix and size of customer segments a daunting marketing task.

Alternatively, Bolman (2015)<sup>3</sup> identifies five strategic marketing challenges for marketing leaders:

- (1) The convergence between customers and brands – the author highlights that customers go through multitude of „interaction points“ with desired brands before they make the final purchase. This requires both immaculate intra-organizational communication and company-wide spanning employee commitment;

<sup>1</sup> Hill, K. (2013) Use Of Ad Blocking Is On The Rise. Forbes.com. 8/21/2013, p14-14. last accessed on:04.04.2015.

<sup>2</sup> Blocker, C. and Flint, D. (2007) Customer segments as moving targets: integrating customer value dynamism into segment instability logic. *Industrial marketing management*. Vol. 36, pp. 810-822.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/onmarketing/2015/02/11/five-new-challenges-for-tomorrows-global-marketing-leaders/>, last access: 14.04.2015.

- (2) Alignment of local subsidiaries / agencies – due to the diverse and dynamic nature of development of global markets local representatives can no longer merely represent the corporate brand. Instead, they are required to align their activities with global brand changes;
- (3) Transition to spoke-hub brand system – with the evolution of marketing, companies realize the importance of restructuring according to the spoke-hub model, which denotes a network of connections that resemble a chariot wheel. In marketing terms, successful companies move towards global-to-regional model, whereby local subsidiaries/representatives apply positioning techniques based on the global corporate ideas;
- (4) The internet of things – the author underlines the importance of interconnectedness between physical goods and internet. Various companies such as automotive and household producers have introduced internet applications' capabilities with their products. This naturally takes marketing into another level, where the circumstances necessitate new types and forms of company-customer relationships.
- (5) Recruitment and management of multivalent team players – the new market paradigms require new skills and competences, which revolve around the following: management of user experience, capability of designing and working with content marketing, ability to manage cross channel activities, integration of marketing technologies, and brand management. The author accentuates on the fact that companies will face the challenge of reeducating their personnel and hire new talents to ensure their aptitude to the new marketing realities.

Given the aforementioned challenges and circumstances that limit the effectiveness of traditional marketing tools, marketing managers seek to explore new strategies that can make their message visible to target audiences. One option, that has proven success record, is viral marketing. It is a strategy whereby the marketing message emanates from other customers instead of the company itself. By virtue of this, companies try to limit the number of customers who will skip the message by using surreptitious techniques.

### **Origins, impact and pros and cons of viral marketing**

The term viral marketing has gained outstanding popularity in 1990's, but some scholars trace its roots back to the 70's of the XX century (in the famous book of Richard Dawkins – „The selfish gene”, published in 1976). As a matter of fact, some theorists tie the premises on which viral marketing is built to the emergence of memetics as a scientific field in the abovementioned period. According to Burman (2012)<sup>4</sup> memetics is a research area incorporating studies on information transfer between people. More thoroughly examined, memetics deal with tracking the metamorphosis of ideas, concepts, broader information, etc. as they are transmitted from one individual to another. The core concept of memetics revolves around the presumption that some memes survive, while other fade away just as some genes in human beings. In that sense memetics tries to identify whether and how can an individual influence the adoption of beliefs of other people he associates with. Judging by that it can be concluded that the effectiveness of meme can be attributed to the efficiency of the „initiator”.

In the beginning of 1990's Dawkins (1993) broadened the understanding of memes by viewing them as tools for spreading religious beliefs<sup>5</sup>. Although the dispute about coining the

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<sup>4</sup> Burman, J. T. (2012) The misunderstanding of memes: Biography of an unscientific object, 1976–1999. *Perspectives on Science* 20 (1): 75–104.

<sup>5</sup> Dawkins, R. (1993) Viruses of the mind. *Dennett and his critics: Demystifying mind*, 13-27.

term viral marketing still persists, some scientists attribute the name to Rayport (1996)<sup>6</sup> who wrote the article „The virus of marketing”. In that same article the author emphasizes that virus message can outperform other forms of communication as they reach target audiences with little time, limited budgets and high effectiveness.

Later on, De Bruyn and Lilien (2004)<sup>7</sup> argued that viral marketing is a cost-effective method of raising the awareness about a product / service between customers (as opposed to company – to –consumer communications). Other authors<sup>8</sup> define it as the „process of encouraging communication among consumer networks. Still others<sup>9</sup> broaden the explanation of viral marketing by adding that it is a marketing technique that generates positive impact on brand awareness through usage of social networks and self-proliferation of viral messages. More recent studies of viral marketing effectiveness<sup>10</sup> delineate that the success of such campaigns is built on choosing a proper „sharing mechanism”.

Many customers do exert influence on the attitudes and opinions of their reference groups. Viral marketing is in essence a strategy used by marketers to reach „opinion leaders” who, given their influential authority, are expected to promote a company’s products in an inexpensive and effective way. In view of that, the first widely recognized viral marketing campaign was in 1997 exemplifying the „Hotmail” email service that requested customers to pass along the message to their friends. Jurvetson and Draper (2008)<sup>11</sup> argues that the company had 500 000 users by the end of 1996, while the subsequent year the number rose dramatically to reach 12 000 000.

The main difference between viral marketing and the other forms of communication is that the former relies on personal relationships between people. By virtue of this a company invests efforts predominantly in selecting the right mix of „initial customers” and then watches the WOM (word-of-mouth) spread around. Another advantage that companies employing viral marketing use as their leverage is the fact that customers are more willing to trust other customers rather than companies themselves. Viral marketing effects can achieve unseen levels of outreach if the product is perceived positively by the initial group of selected customers. Stanimirov and Zhechev (2013)<sup>12</sup> outline that customer tend to highly recommend a product, which they have positive experience with, while the contrary holds true, but with much higher magnitude.

As to online communication channels, Ho and Dempsey (2010)<sup>13</sup> examine the likelihood of forwarding online content suggesting that users who tend to be more individualistic / altruistic are likely to forward bigger amount of online content. The two authors categorize potential motivation for online content forwarding into: (1) personal

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<sup>6</sup> Rayport, Jeffrey (1996) *The Virus of Marketing*. Fast Company. Last access: 04.2015.

<sup>7</sup> De Bruyn, A., & Gary, L. L. (2004) *A Multi-Stage Model of Word of Mouth Through Electronic Referrals*. eBusiness Research Center Working Paper.

<sup>8</sup> Phelps, J. E., Lewis, R., Mobilio, L., Perry, D., & Raman, N. (2004) *Viral Marketing or Electronic Word-of-Mouth Advertising: Examining Consumer Responses and Motivations to Pass Along Email*. *Journal of Advertising Research*, 44(4), 333-348.

<sup>9</sup> Kiss, C., & Bichler, M. (2008) *Identification of Influencers – Measuring Influence in Customer Networks*. *Decision Support Systems*, 46(1), 233-253.

<sup>10</sup> Schultze, C. Schoeler, L. and Skiera, B. (2014) *Not all fun and games: Viral marketing for utilitarian products*. *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 78, pp. 1-19.

<sup>11</sup> Jurvetson, S. and Draper, T. (1997) *Viral marketing phenomenon explained*, [http://dfj.com/news/article\\_26.shtml](http://dfj.com/news/article_26.shtml), last access: 30.04.2015.

<sup>12</sup> Stanimirov, E. and Zhechev, V. (2013) *CRM management*. Science and Economics, University of Economics-Varna.

<sup>13</sup> Ho, J. and Dempsey, M. (2010) *Viral marketing: motivations to forward online content*. *Journal of Business Research*, Vol. 63, Issue 9-10, pp. 1000-1006.

growth needs; (2) altruistic needs; (3) individualistic needs and (4) the need to belong to a community/group. On the other hand, given the aforementioned marketing clutter, an increasing number of customers are trying to stay away from any ad content, which may limit the online effectiveness of viral marketing in future.

As with any strategy, viral marketing has some benefits and may also face shortcomings. Chaffey (2009)<sup>14</sup> summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of viral marketing. He points out that the main pros of viral marketing are: (1) its cost effectiveness in terms of extended customer outreach and (2) high positive impact of consumer referrals. The author makes a recap of viral marketing disadvantages by stating that this strategy requires high initial investment, while at the same time it is not guaranteed that the venture will pay off. Additionally, it cannot be predicted whether the message will purposely „go viral”. Finally, the company launching a viral marketing campaign has limited control over the spread of the „virus”.

Provided the potential weaknesses of viral marketing strategy marketers are looking for new practical alternatives to reach their target audiences. One of the strategic options for companies is the stealth marketing strategy, whereby the advertisement shall not be perceived as such.

#### **The essence of stealth marketing**

Stealth marketing is referred to as undercover, covert, masked, etc. marketing (Petty and Andrews, 2008)<sup>15</sup>. Stealth marketing is constantly mistaken with viral marketing and covert marketing. *Firstly*, some practitioners deem stealth marketing as an improved version of viral marketing (the latter being considered rather broad, than effective). Not only does stealth marketing use more personal techniques, but it also gets the proper people informing others about products without disclosing associations with particular company. To sum up, both stealth and viral marketing are form of WOM. The difference, however, lies in the fact that the former relies on the pre-selection process expecting high effectiveness of information transmission, while the latter emphasizes on mass communication to broader audience hoping the message will generate „buzz” and reach the right mix of people to buy the actual product.

*Secondly*, according to Martin and Smith (2008)<sup>16</sup> covert denotes something that is not explicitly displayed, but not necessarily intentionally hidden. Additionally, in covert marketing the brand endorser is exhibited, while by employing a stealth marketing strategy marketers are deliberately circumventing the display of the brand owner.

*Thirdly*, stealth and undercover marketing are also frequently associated with one and the same type of actions – promotion of products by tools that customers are unaware of. There is lack of theoretical background as to the interconnectedness or distinction between the two terms. From the review of extant literature on this topic, the author has found little or no evidence of studies of undercover marketing as a strategy (while stealth marketing is regularly regarded as such). For instance, Gensicke (2006)<sup>17</sup> makes a reference to undercover marketing as a „promotional method”, which seems similar to one of the stealth marketing

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<sup>14</sup> Chaffey, D. (2009) *Internet marketing: strategy, implementation and practice*. Pearson, pp. 559-560.

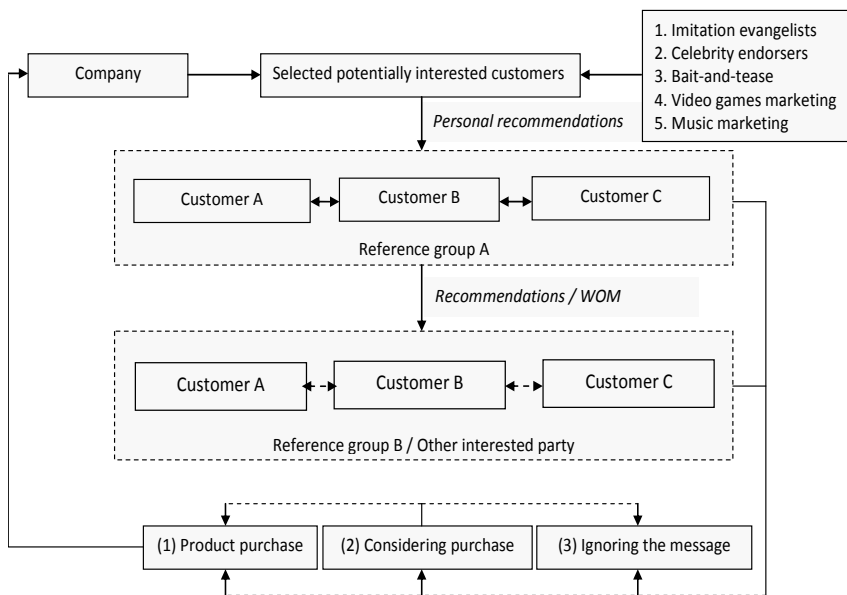
<sup>15</sup> Petty, J. and Andrews, C. (2008) Covert Marketing Unmasked: A Legal and Regulatory Guide for Practices That Mask Marketing Messages. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*: Spring 2008, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 7-18.

<sup>16</sup> Martin, K. Smith, C. (2008) Commercializing Social Interaction: The Ethics of Stealth Marketing. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*: Spring 2008, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 45-56.

<sup>17</sup> Gensicke, R. (2006) Undercover marketing: conversation or commerce? Unpublished honor thesis, California State University, pp. 1-5.

types (imitation evangelists / brand pushers). Other recent studies<sup>18</sup> refer to undercover marketing as buzz generation through hiring volunteers to try and promote new products, which once again resembles „brand pushing”.

Kaikati and Kaikati (2004)<sup>19</sup> describe stealth marketing as a strategy employed by companies, which target customers surreptitiously without their knowledge and consent as to the delivery of the „hidden message”. The two authors outline that stealth marketing lies on two premises: (1) word-of-mouth (WOM) is effectively the most promising promotional tool and (2) personal recommendations from reference groups play a crucial role in marketing success. Technically, stealth marketing involves design and spread of carefully crafted message (normally through „buzz” techniques) to a target audience in a surreptitious way. Considering their assumptions it can be construed that this strategy has similar manifestation to viral marketing. However, the major difference lies in the fact that viral marketing is mass in its display, while stealth marketing intends to capture the attention of few pre-selected members of particular customer groups, who on their behalf are expected to make referrals to other individuals from their peer group. The latter are anticipated to show interest in the product, which is marketed surreptitiously, since the former customers tend to encourage those, who are prone to like to experience it (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1 – A conceptual model of the practical application of stealth marketing strategies**

<sup>18</sup> Pallavi, V. (2013) The stout viability of stealth marketing and its apt techniques to abet marketing. *International Journal of Retailing and rural business perspectives*, Vol. 2 (4), pp. 659-660.

<sup>19</sup> Kaikati, A. and Kaikati, J. (2004) Stealth Marketing: How to Reach Consumers Surreptitiously, *California Management Review*, 46, 6-22.

Figure 1 attempts to visualize the message transmission process in a stealth marketing strategy framework. Initially a company must carefully select the potentially interested customers and select a strategy to be employed. Then the assumption is that these initially selected customers will reach their peers, friends, etc. through personal recommendations of the product, who on their behalf will spread the word to other interested parties. Naturally, customers who have been reached will either decide to buy/try the product straightaway, consider trying/purchasing it or they will simply discard / ignore the message.

Other authors<sup>20</sup> also explain stealth marketing as a mean to reach the target audience through personal interaction without the advertisement being recognized as such, but they do not pay attention to the possible associated deceptive character of the message. Milne, Bahl, and Rohm (2008)<sup>21</sup> broaden the definition by distinguishing between unfair deceptive practices and marketing communications. Another definition is provided by Cambridge dictionary<sup>22</sup> – „advertising a product in such a way that people are not aware that you are trying to persuade them to buy it”. To sum up, most definitions of stealth marketing describe the surreptitious character of message delivery and construe this strategy as a powerful promotional tool that can outperform traditional promotional tools. Given the distinction between viral and stealth marketing, the next paragraph describes the different variations of the latter excluding the viral strategy.

### Variations of stealth marketing strategies and practical examples<sup>23</sup>

#### 1. Imitation evangelists / brand pushers

Imitation evangelists are novice actors, hired to execute stealth campaigns. Their job is to present commercial messages to selected customers in a stealthy way (Kardes, Cronley and Cline, 2014<sup>24</sup>). In an actual fact, they are not revealing that they have been specially hired to do the job. According to Kaikati and Kaikati (2004) these actors are believed to become trendsetters who can potentially bring a whole new flow of adherents. Very frequently companies hire actors to display / show off with new products prior to their launch. Great Wall, a Chinese automobile manufacturer, started operations in Bulgaria in 2012<sup>25</sup>. Prior to the official launch and distribution, the company hired people in bigger cities in the country (where official dealership were established) to drive around and draw customers' attention.

#### 2. Celebrity endorsers

Celebrities have long been used as icons appearing in different forms of communication with target audiences. Customers are normally well aware that celebrities are being paid for participating in a commercial, but very frequently the latter also talk about brands they use on a regular basis without explicitly demonstrating that they are actually endorsing a brand. For example, Brad Pitt received \$7 million to endorse the iconic French perfume Chanel No.5 in a commercial at the end of 2012<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> Cooney, J. (2005) First word. *License!*, 8(2), 10.

<sup>21</sup> Milne, G. R., Bahl, S., & Rohm, A. (2008) Toward a framework for assessing covert marketing practices. *Journal of Public Policy and Marketing*, 27(1), 57-62.

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/business-english/stealth-marketing>, last accessed: 04.04.2015.

<sup>23</sup> Kaikati, Andrew M. and Jack G. Kaikati (2004) Stealth Marketing: How to Reach Consumers Surreptitiously, *California Management Review*, 46, pp. 6-22.

<sup>24</sup> Kardes, F., Cronley, M. and Cline, T. (2014) *Consumer behavior*. Second edition, Cengage learning.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.novinite.com/articles/142316/Australia+Recalls+China%27s+Great+Wall,+Chery+Cars+over+Asbestos>, last access: 02.05.2015.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.ibtimes.com/brad-pitt-chanel-perfume-commercial-worth-7-million-debuts-video-846775>, last access: 02.05.2015.

### 3. *Bait-and-tease marketing*

It is a strategy that attracts customers' attention to an object, product, symbol, etc. that is subsequently revealed to be something quite different (Jurca, 2010<sup>27</sup>). For instance, in 2011 BMW released an attention-grabbing commercial named „10 steps – how to steal jewellery”<sup>28</sup>, whereby the central object was the new concept model i8 and its extremely innovative features. However, the other central idea of the company was to introduce the audience to the „ConnectedDrive”<sup>29</sup> services and applications that help customers: control the car, receive assistance, make reservations, navigate, browse, etc. That same feature is available as an option in other models from the range.

### 4. *Video games marketing*

Computer games, video games and online gaming have tremendously increased their popularity. Games have extended their scope to a powerful communication medium of not only products and services (Zackariasson and Wilson, 2009<sup>30</sup>), but experiences. The effectiveness of traditional TV advertising is frequently questioned by academics and practitioners, while messages delivered via computer, video and internet games have been considered more efficient as they allow: (1) more careful targeting of the audience and (2) hiding the message as a part of the entertainment experience. For example, *UniCredit* Group extensively markets itself in popular video/computer games such as *Fifa 15* (football simulation video game released at the last quarter of 2014).

### 5. *Music marketing*

Although visible to some experts, many marketing managers exploit the advantage of popular music tracks to promote their brands in the „unarmed” eye of the viewer. The emotional touch of music coupled with the use of attractive imagery is a good proxy to marketers to expose their brands in a surreptitious way. The latter has changed dramatically the visual presentation of different song available from multiple streaming channels. Music is also a good environment for promoting lifestyle products. For instance, the popular US Rap singer Rick Ross mentions and displays the ultra premium French vodka *Ciroc* (No Games, released in 2013)<sup>31</sup>.

## **The changing new understanding of the marketing mix in stealth marketing context**

Due to various macroeconomic changes, digital revolutions, introduction to new management practices, and the advancement of business contexts and models the traditional marketing mix has extended its scope and enriched its application areas. In service industries, academics and practitioners have included people, processes and physical evidence to the traditional 4Ps. In an e-marketing context, some authors have included sector specific marketing mix variables such as: individualization, privacy, customer service, community,

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<sup>27</sup> Jurca, M.A. (2010). The forms of unconventional advertising - a theoretical approach. *Management and Marketing from Craiova*, (2): 323-333. Available at: [http://www.mnmk.ro/documents/2010ed2/15\\_Alina%20Jurca%20FFFF.pdf](http://www.mnmk.ro/documents/2010ed2/15_Alina%20Jurca%20FFFF.pdf), last access: 02.05.2015.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.bmwblog.com/2011/08/13/video-how-to-steal-jewelery-in-10-steps/>, last access: 02.05.2015.

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.bmw.com/com/en/insights/technology/connecteddrive/2013/>, last access: 02.05.2015.

<sup>30</sup> Zackariasson, P. and Wilson, T. (2009) Basics in the Marketing of Video Games: The Nature of the Offering, Internal Marketing of Projects, and a Project Managers View of the Overall Process. The 20th Annual NFF Conference: „Business as Usual”. Turku/Åbo, Finland 19-21 August.

<sup>31</sup> The song was released as the second promotional single from the sixth studio album of the rapper (Mastermind).

site, security and sales promotions<sup>32</sup>. With the emergence of stealth marketing as a scientific field and widely practiced strategy, marketing managers need to consider some specifics that shape the marketing mix (Table 1).

**Table 1 – Marketing mix from stealth marketing viewpoint**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Place</b>
Accentuating on innovative product benefits	Hubs of interest
Not revealing side effects / possible negative impacts	Careful targeting
Emotional advertising	Broader outreach
<b>Price</b>	<b>Promotion</b>
Price insensitivity	Concealed identity
Premium pricing	Unrevealed endorsements on air

In product terms stealth marketing in its variations emphasizes on innovative product benefits rather than on core advantages. Products, which are stealthily marketed, are normally cutting-edge technologies or more generally viewed as upscale products featuring state of art attributes. That is to say marketers must concentrate on third (extended) product level. Due to some legal restrictions most specifications of products that are traditionally marketed should include side effects / possible negative impacts that can result from usage. Given the nature of stealth marketing exclusion of such is a must. The latter has to be taken into account by companies with regards to dissemination of deceptive / misleading information. Finally, stealthily marketed products tend to make a memorable impact on consumers' mind<sup>33,34</sup>. Therefore marketers must seek emotional response that leads to reaction (recommendation, spreading the „buzz“, persuasion, etc.) and emotional attachment of the target audiences.

In view of place, stealth marketing is by and large practiced in places of high interest to the initially selected customers. For that reason marketers must discover such hubs and try to take advantage of having the proper people at the right place. Due to its nature stealth marketing requires careful targeting that controls customer privacy. Companies must be aware that failure to conceal that customers are being tracked and offered products in a surreptitious way may result in campaign fiasco. Stealth marketing has far broader outreach compared to traditional marketing channels. This holds especially true for online gaming and music marketing. They overcome international boundaries and draw the attention of an enormous fan base.

<sup>32</sup> Srinivasan, R. and Jollyvinisheeba, J. (2013) Essential strategies of e-marketing. *International Journal of scientific research and management*. pp. 251-255.

<sup>33</sup> Kardes, F., Cronley, M. and Cline, T. (2014) *Consumer behavior*. Second edition, Cengage learning.

<sup>34</sup> Zackariasson, P. and Wilson, T. (2009) Basics in the Marketing of Video Games: The Nature of the Offering, Internal Marketing of Projects, and a Project Managers View of the Overall Process. The 20th Annual NFF Conference: „Business as Usual“. Turku/Åbo, Finland 19-21 August.

As mentioned before, stealth marketing is generally used for new, innovative, upscale products. As a result price sensitive customers are not a preferred option for such campaigns. Additionally, premium pricing is also frequently employed for two major reasons: (1) maintaining positive perceptions of buyers<sup>35</sup> as to the prestige of the marketed product and (2) inclusion of associated expenditures for stealth marketing in the final release price.

Finally, promotion-wise stealth marketing relies on concealing the identity of the company to prevent customers from regarding visual presentation of the product as a commercial act. That is built on the premise that customers would trust other people they associate with more than they would potentially trust a commercial entity. Companies employing stealth marketing as a strategy also endorse products via on-air TV shows and other publicly available forums. In view of that, the former must be cautious as to unveiling the endorsement. That way customers may potentially feel that they are being tricked and refuse trial / purchase of the product being surreptitiously marketed.

### **Conclusion**

Stealth marketing has been used by marketers as a prospective strategy for bringing new customer groups to stores and showroom of big companies. It is an innovative way of capturing customers' attention that helps marketers overcome the traditional marketing tools' clutter. In contrast to viral marketing, stealth marketing strategies aim narrower audience to which the product is presented, expecting that the latter will recommend it to other people (through WOM) to whom it may also seem interesting and attractive.

The positive impact on the marketing function of many organizations through stealth marketing has drawn the attention of other companies who launch invasive promotions under the increasing rivalry pressure. In an effort to conjure up positive connotations some companies enter into ethical implications that could create irreversible distrust for future marketing actions. Marketers should watchfully monitor social relationships between stealth marketing campaign target groups to avoid a possible backlash effect. That can be achieved to design of a proper plan related to the implementation of the stealth marketing mix. Only by scrutinizing the stages through which the product reaches the target audience in a subtle way (according to the chosen strategy) can companies ensure stealth marketing success.

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<sup>35</sup> Gittings, Christopher (2002) *The Advertising Handbook*. New York: Routledge.