



**Katarína Fichnová**

University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra  
Faculty of Arts  
Department of Mass Media Communications  
and Advertisement  
Slovak Republic  
kfichnova@ukf.sk

**Łukasz P. Wojciechowski**

University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius  
Faculty of Mass Media Communication  
Department of Mass Media Communication  
Slovak Republic  
lukasz.wojciechowski@ucm.sk

## **THE CREATIVE PROCESS IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AMBIENT CAMPAIGN**

**Summary:** In considerably penetrated advertising environment which still more often uses relatively traditional practices, more creative, more original and more personal contact or experience based forms of positive promotion have been generated. This direction is covered by guerilla marketing, and within it particularly by forms using ambient media integrating natural environment of a discourse recipient. Principled representation of originality in the essence of this form of marketing communication assumes a need to ensure optimization of a creative process by advertising agency in such a way that the teams proposing artefacts will work under conditions maximizing the creativity of final proposals. In our paper, we present identification of optimal form of a creative process course in the advertising agency, while we compare creative results (represented by proposals of the ambient advertisement) of the teams working and communicating in two forms – classical “face to face” form and communication mediated electronically. Virtual electronically mediated communication (EMC) offers a possibility to cooperate from distance places; it eliminates some inhibitors of FtF communication and offers so called “multi-logue”. But results of our survey show statistically significant superiority of classical form of communication among the monitored factors of the creativity in groups of the teams which used such classical form of communication during their creative process.

**Keywords:** ambient marketing, creativity, creative process, EMC, FtF, creative achievement.

**JEL Classification:** M37.

### **1. Introduce. Creativity in marketing communication**

Importance of creativity<sup>1</sup> in marketing communication is indisputable: creativity is considered as a competitive advantage [Falat, 2004], creativity sells

<sup>1</sup> Terminological remark: terms creativity and productivity are used as synonyms in this paper. Their meaning is not differentiated in our conditions; the term creativity is used only for a short

[Gunn, 2000], creative advertisement is easy to remember and popular [Reinartz, 2013], it results in more positive attitude towards the advertisement [Ang, Lee & Leong, 2007], and it evokes higher extent of consumer's attention [Reinartz & Saffert, 2013; Till & Baack, 2005; Pieters, et al., 2002]. To create such creative advertisement, it is important that the process runs optimally. We call this process creative and it has got its own patterns. In the presented paper we deal with specific conditions of a creative process used in the advertising agencies the result of which should be a creative advertisement. It is necessary to take into account a fact that novelty – originality can be expressed differently in marketing communication: not only by (1) *composition*, (2) *colours*, (3) *sequencing of the elements*, (4) *unexpected inclusion of unusual combination*, (5) *or by a selection of protagonists*. Novelty – originality can be also expressed (6) *by ability to cross the border of object*, where the message is placed, or (7) *unconventional connection with environment*. It represents using of so called *dissociation* described by A. Koestler [1976] which caused birth of many discoveries. (8) *the used medium* can be also original. We speak about so called *ambient media* in marketing communication which has started to appear since the mid of 90s of the last century. Some authors [e.g. Frey, 2008; Grimpliniová, 2007] present this type of marketing communication together with other types as *new directions in marketing* (9), which should also include other types of marketing such as *guerilla marketing, viral marketing, promotional marketing, digital marketing, event marketing, mobile marketing and others*. Despite of all above listed, types of marketing are significantly based on originality<sup>2</sup> of solution of communication; originality of guerilla marketing is principally represented in its own nature.

*The aim* of the presented paper is to describe an essence of guerilla marketing and its basic technique of ambient marketing. The other aim is to identify an optimal form of a creative process course in the advertising agency – specifically to compare creative achievement represented by created ambient advertisement in a certain field among the teams working and communicating in two forms – classical “face to face” form and communication mediated electronically.

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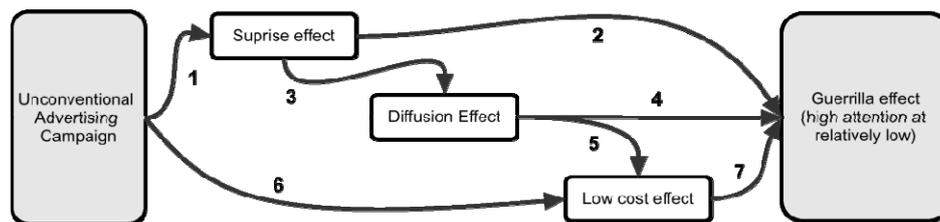
time. According to a text analysis of scientific sources of M. Cikánek, et al. [2013] a boom of the term creativity started at the end of 90s of the last century, while the term productivity has got longer tradition. In Czech Republic J. Hlavsa [1985] also considered differentiation of the terms. Similarly, these two terms have different meaning also in Polish environment [see Nečka, 2003].

<sup>2</sup> The originality is considered as the most important element of creativity [see e.g. Szobiová, 2004; Hlavsa, 1985].

## 2. Guerilla marketing

The essence of guerilla marketing is an advertisement and promotion of goods and services by using unconventional techniques customized to a target group.

In its core, Guerilla marketing is based on existing verified and used marketing principles, which are, however, supplementary, creatively and originally used in adequate way. Therefore, Katharina Hutter and Stefan Hoffmann [2011] present a presence of benefits that have their basis in a beneficial relationship of costs for promotion and resulting effect as the main intention why companies and organizations start to implement guerilla marketing into their marketing targets. To achieve this target, campaigns are primarily focused on invocation of so called effect of surprise **in the first phase**, which is achieved by creation of a new and unconventional idea [Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; Szobiová, 2004; UNCTAD, 2004; Franková, 2011; Fichnová, 2013]. This phase is followed by next phase called a phase of “diffusive effect” the aim of which is to stimulate consumers and/or media to spread the message further. It causes another effect, so called “low costs effect”, it means that increasing effect of surprise is aggregated by a number of persons in the target group, what finally decreases relative costs (fig. 1.)



**Fig. 1.** The basic guerilla effect

Source: Hutter & Hoffmann [2011, p. 43].

Development of consumers and advertising messages is still more conformed to sophisticated needs and forms, what is one of the reasons of creation and existence of ambient marketing in the world of omnipresent technological and communication revolutions or new media that are constantly discovered and that can fulfil requirements of ambient form of presentation.

Guerilla marketing activities are based on a basic thesis: minimum effort and costs, maximum success. This marketing uses each opportunity even the one which may seem unusual. A person who wants to apply querilla marketing tools constantly combines typical behaviour of recipients, their habits and style to promote a product, idea, or thought in the best possible way [Patalas, 2009].

J.C. Levinson [1994] himself used the following principle as a basis of guerilla marketing: *Use current technology as a tool to build your business.*

The advertisements and promotion use unusual places and presentation of a subject, thought or idea by using this tool standardly and by a program. It is a differentiated innovative heterogeneity and non-standard form which uses specific public places and the latest technologies. It is installed in unexpected places and its form is different from existing forms of advertising and it surprises a consumer [Meyer & Niepel, 1994; Derbaix & Vanhamme, 2000]. The advertisement principally uses mainly absurd, humour or shocking messages for this purpose. Particularly production of ambient marketing and sensation marketing use the effect of surprise most often<sup>3</sup>. Guerilla marketing techniques include<sup>4</sup>: Alternative marketing, Ambush marketing, Astroturfing, Experiential marketing, Presume marketing, Tissue-packing advertising, Undercover marketing, Viral marketing, Wild posting and particularly Ambient marketing which uses unconventional media, such as shopping carts, large areas of the buildings, rubbish bins, lamps of the public lighting, benches (*Street furniture*) etc. However, the selected localization should be associated with a message of the advertisement, so use of untraditional place was not purposeless.

### **2.1. Characteristic of ambient advertisement**

Ambient marketing is a term that is mainly and most often connected with non-standard, imaginative and innovative marketing despite that the problem with its defining is influenced by a fact that it usually includes activities from the fields which have nothing in common [Luxton & Drummond, 2000; Wilczek & Fertak, 2004]. In marginal understanding, the term ambient means a product used for one time or for the first time. On one side, the ambient marketing faces many problems, for example in the form of misunderstanding and controversy. Adequately expressed and directed in relation to a target group, the ambient marketing currently represents one of the strongest marketing weapons [Hatałska, 2009; Kaszuba, 2014]. The common denominators of activities of the ambient marketing are mainly novelty, attractiveness, diversion from a standard, drawing the attention and surprise of a recipient, what can be achieved only very hardly on a varied and strongly saturated market. Currently, with a very strong diversification, but also simultaneous convergence of media and their technolog-

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<sup>3</sup> As an example we can mention so called *publicity stunts* in case of Felix Baumgartner and his "Stratosphere Jump", although it was expensive. Record overcame by vice-president of Google Alan Eustace in 2014.

<sup>4</sup> It is incomplete list; there are only most frequently used tools.

ical possibilities, the advertisement must find the most suitable field of action in several areas. Media that are the holders of a discourse therefore use technologies which intermediate interaction and activate a recipient. Technologies strengthen other parts of discourse, which by different senses affect not only a recipient, but also addressed person who can actively participate on offered game.

The means of mass communication as we know them in a traditional form significantly lose their importance and strength. Use of ambient media provides, inter alia, a high rate of probability of media interest, as far as the advertisement is secondary spread by these media [Szyszka, 2013] by a free propagation of news among the people by e-mail, video channels such as Youtube, Vimeo, instant messaging, e.g. ICQ, XMPP, iMessage or Skype, or through social networks such as Facebook, Google+ and other available channels. It is usually financially less demanding form, so the advertisement cannot attract the attention by financially ambitious effects and wild expressiveness. These campaigns also use technological elements that are in interaction with their surrounding by integral part of modern ambient marketing. They include different sensors which react to movement and trigger unexpected noises or images, *Bluetooth technology* and its wireless communication with supporting devices, *bluecasting*, such as digital projection and *mapping* to the buildings in the city, *beamvertising*, *augmented reality*, *digital storefront*, *mobile tagging*, etc.

It is assumed that a consumer will be in the least expected moment under the attack of the message being advertised, as far as the consumer cannot avoid it as it is in case of standard promotional means. According to the Chartered Institute of Marketing a definition of ambient media is very similar. Communication platform surrounding the consumer in his everyday life: "*Originally known as 'fringe media', ambient media are communication platforms that surround us in everyday life – from petrol pump advertising to advertising projected onto buildings to advertising on theatre tickets, cricket pitches or even pay slips*" [www 1].

The problems with defining and clear determination of a term is also affected by a fact that it usually covers activities from significantly different fields [Wilczek & Fertak, 2004]. Ambient activities can include drawings on pavements, placing of advertisement on the conveyor belts of the cash desks in the shops, colouring of water in the pool in front of the cinema, organization of simulated street processions and manifestations, protests or Flash Mobs choreographies interesting for public.

### **3. Creative process during creation of ambient advertisement and communication of a team in the advertising agency**

Creative process represents a sequence of thoughts and activities leading to a creative product. “*It is a process of experiencing the internal stimulation of the subject and processing of stimuli coming from external environment*” [Szobiová, s. 29, 2004]. It is affected by many factors [see Model zdrojov kreativity J.S. Dacey & K.H. Lenová, 2000]. Creative process in advertising agencies is mostly a team work. Team work is beneficial for production of creative ideas, while so called social facilitating effect or synergistic effect of a group is considered. In 1973 H. Lamm and G. Trommsdorff [1973] presented a study, where they compared individual performance in the field of creativity with solving the tasks in a group in the form of brainstorming technique and other procedures. Based on their own research, they described several factors of synergistic effect of the group. However, they also pointed out to possible negative consequences of the group work inhibitors. Their researches were focused on classical form of communication, so called face to face. In connection with this, the professionals think about possible elimination of negative factors of this communication by its substitution or completion with electronically mediated communication. Electronically mediated communication (EMC) offers a possibility of cooperation of top professionals being at the particular time located in different places, while it offers a communication model – so called “multi-logue”; it means interactive written discourse which does not require changing of participants of a discussion, eliminates so called emotional sub-text – however, what can on the other side lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of a message. O. Hilliges, et al. [2007] compared brainstorming made in traditional way with electronically supported form (probands consisted of 15 pairs of students studying computer science, architecture, design, construction engineering, musicology, and journalism). Pairs worked together in one room, where they used electronic desk and a board. The authors of the research found out that results of traditional brainstorming and electronically supported form are of the same quality and quantity. However, this research did not identify how the performance is changed when using *exclusively* electronically mediated communication – it means a case when the participants of the creative process are in different locations. This process was chosen by the authors Hao-Chuan Wang, Susan R. Fussell and Leslie D. Setlock [2009], who examined differences between a group creativity – team work performed by a videochat and text chatting. Their research did not include comparison with performance of the groups working by using traditional face to face form of communication.

### 3.1. Research problem (RP)

Based on the above stated facts, we decided to examine effectiveness of different forms of communication used by the teams (classical FtF and electronic communication without a personal contact) in terms of extent of creativity of the final product – proposal of ambient advertisement:

*RP Are there any differences in creativity of ambient advertisements that were created by teams communicating in classical “face to face” way of communication and the teams that used only electronically mediated communication?*

### 3.2. Research group and procedure

A group consisted of employees working in small and micro advertising agencies in Slovakia and students of both external and daily study program of marketing communication and advertising. The group consisted of 66 people (average age – 24.23 years); in total – 11 teams with 4-6 members. The research was executed in the form of experiment with controlled conditions – each team received the same task in the form of brief – to create an ambient advertisement (theme, targets, target group, budget, deadline, ...).

The teams were divided as follows: teams which communicated during the process of creation only personally, the teams which communicated only by using electronic media (e.g. Facebook group, WhatsApp, Microsoft Skype, Apple Facetime and Microsoft Lync, ...).

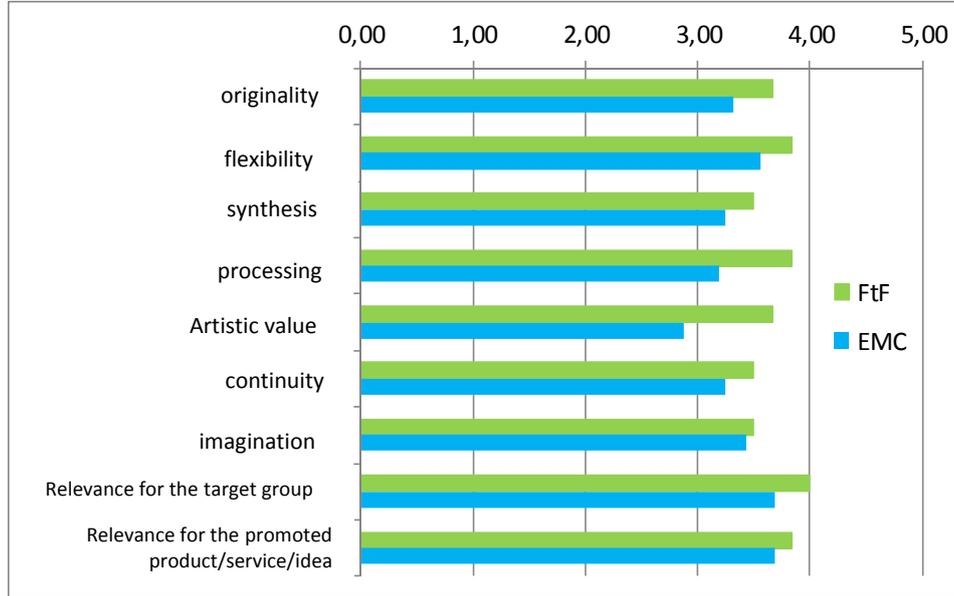
### 3.3. Used methods

To identify creativity of the ambient advertisement proposal we used a version of evaluation scale of advertisement defined by the authors R.E. Smith, S.B. MacKenzie, et al. [2007] modified by us, consisting of two parts (evaluation of divergence and relevance) which identify 9 factors of advertisement creativity. The respondents were also asked to deliver not only a proposal of the ambient advertisement, but also reflections of creative process, evaluation, notes, remarks, and comments. Reflections were subject of broadly conceived research. We deal with them only marginally in this paper just to illustrate the found results.

### 3.4. Analysis and interpretation of the results

Average score in creativity of final advertisements achieved in separate types of teams is presented in the fig. 3 and it is depicted in the fig. 2. It is also evident at the level of averages that classical form of communication in the

teams resulted in creation of such advertisements that achieved higher scores in all criteria of creativity.



**Legend (also applies to fig. 3):**

FtF = face to face = during the work of the team communication was carried out only in personal way  
 EMC = electronically mediated communication = during work of the team communication was carried out only in the form of electronically mediated information (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, chats, etc.)

**Fig. 2.** Comparison of average scores of the teams working in different ways to achieve final design of the ambient advertisement according to criteria of R.E. Smith, S.B. Mackenzie, et al. [2007] in performed research

Source: Own research.

	FtF		EMC	
	AM	sd	AM	sd
originality	3.67	1.61	3.31	1.39
Flexibility	3.83	1.44	3.56	0.94
Synthesis	3.50	1.73	3.25	1.07
Processing	3.83	1.44	3.19	0.96
Artistic value	3.67	1.15	2.88	1.13
Fluency	3.50	1.32	3.25	0.93
Imagination	3.50	0.87	3.44	0.73
Relevance to the target group	4.00	1.73	3.69	0.84
Relevance to promoted product/idea	3.83	1.44	3.69	1.13
t-test FtF and EMC	0.005 Sig *			

**Fig. 3.** Comparison of importance of differences of average scores of the teams in the creativity of ambient advertisement according to criteria of R.E. Smith, S.B. Mackenzie, et al. [2007] in performed research

Source: Own research.

The above stated was also confirmed by a confrontation of data – creativity of the advertisements created by groups of teams communicating in face to face method significantly differs from the results of the teams communicating by using electronic media (signification level 0.001).

The findings show that synergic effect of a group and its impact on creativity is the most significant in case of personal contact and at the same time the communication mediated by electronic media does not completely eliminate the inhibition factors. On the contrary – it may happen that it is necessary to take into account other, yet unidentified inhibitors, which significantly disadvantaged and negatively influenced creative performance of these teams. According to statements of the respondents, it can be caused by several factors: diversion offered by used media is significant; synchronization of communication and communication noises caused by absence of extra-linguistic information. Despite lower performance in the field of creativity of the final ambient advertising, respondents perceived this form as welcomed – respondents mentioned particularly a feeling of time-saving and felt comfort with the possibility to communicate from anywhere. We think that weaker performance was also caused by the fact that different environments do not guarantee a possibility to concentrate on the task sufficiently, however, the mentioned interpretations must be verified in further research which would particularly concentrate on separate factors intervening the creative performance of teams working in the form of communication mediated electronically.

## **Summary**

Results of the research confirm that classical forms of team cooperation are more effective than communication mediated by media when the creative team creates the advertisement. The findings also show that communication mediated by media can bring some inhibitors of a group creative production that are not described yet when preparing the ambient communication.

Despite several positive aspects of the ambient marketing, it will never force our standard means of promotion communication. Not all subjects want and can use this way of advertisement communication for several reasons. Non-standard communication activities cannot be performed by derivation from reality; it means without strategies and knowing of a target group. These results can indicate formation of ambient for ambient itself, as far as it is not possible to carry out ambient campaigns (or any other non-standard activities) without

knowing a recipient of the discourse (behavioural-psychographic determination of a target group is a base for non-standard communication activities). Ambient marketing can be ideal or temporary solution to cover gaps in classical means of advertising. Classical forms of advertising create a scope and form opinion about a product; ambient advertising influences the activities. As shown, we can see the effect of ambient in the best way in its symbiosis with standard advertising means. It is also pointed out by Kolja Wehleit [2003]. In Germany in cooperation with *German Ambient Media association Media e. V.* Researches performed in Germany in 2003 show that connection of ambient media with standard means of communication achieves higher watching by audience. Unconventional form also showed better evaluation of the product and the subject itself being presented in this way (it was liked by more people). We can also point out to reasons of increase of popularity of marketing communication by ambient media. A reason of this increase is progressing fragmentation of the market, switching of TV channels, skipping of pages or simply ignorance of advertisements and changing of consumers' habits.

In conclusion we can state that connection of different forms of promotion of a subject and bearing on a rule of 360° degrees is the most optimum solution. Ambient advertising has become one of the most important forms of unconventional and alternative forms of advertisement. Available researches show that ambient advertising is spread quickly and reports related to spent costs are significant [www 2]. This form has become very popular and practiced in recent time, as far as it can be effectively distinguished in the advertising environment full of "rubbish", by what it brings greater expectations as the advertising technique to the future. A significant increase of awareness of the campaign itself is a consequence of inclusion of ambient media to the traditional campaign. Secondly – ambient media are used as a strategic tool at the time of marketing communication (high rate of acceptability of this type of discourse and at the same time positive impact on evaluation of the product itself). Creation of ambient advertisement should be performed in such a way that teams would be possible to communicate face to face – which, as proven – **results in the most original proposal of the ambient communication of the highest quality** (in terms of flexibility, synthesis, processing, artistic value, fluency, imagination, but also relevance for the target group and the promoted product itself and ideas). Nowadays, still more often preferred electronically mediated communication results in significantly worse solutions in terms of creativity criteria.

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## PROCES KREATYWNY W ŚWIECIE WIRTUALNYM W ROZWOJU NIESTANDARDOWYCH KAMPANII PROMOCYJNYCH

**Streszczenie:** W znanym dość dobrze środowisku reklamowym, ciągle w większości bazującym na tradycyjnych formach przekazu, coraz częściej pojawiają się działania bardziej kreatywne i oryginalne działania promocyjne, oparte na osobistym kontakcie i doświadczeniu. Taki kierunek zmian odzwierciedlają działania wpisujące się w nurt marketingu partyzanckiego, a w szczególności te, które używają niestandardowych form promocji – zapośredniczonych medialnie – integrujących płaszczyznę realnego i dyskursywnego środowiska ich odbiorców. Zasadnicza reprezentacja oryginalności tej formy komunikacji marketingowej zakłada potrzebę zapewnienia optymalizacji procesu twórczego przez agencję reklamową w taki sposób, aby zespoły proponujące artefakty działały w warunkach maksymalizujących kreatywność końcowych propozycji.

W naszym artykule przedstawiamy identyfikację optymalnej formy procesu twórczego w agencji reklamowej, porównując twórcze wyniki (reprezentowane przez propozycje reklamy zewnętrznej) zespołów pracujących i komunikujących się w dwóch formach – klasycznej „twarzą w twarz” oraz mediowanej komputerowo. Komunikacja wirtualna mediowana elektronicznie oferuje możliwości współpracy bez względu na dystans; eliminuje niektóre z inhibitorów komunikacji „twarzą-w-twarz” i oferuje model komunikacji „wielu-do-wielu”. Jednakże wynik naszego badania pokazuje statystycznie znaczącą przewagę klasycznej formy komunikacji wśród monitorowanych czynników kreatywności w grupach zespołów, które wykorzystywały taką klasyczną formę komunikacji podczas ich twórczego procesu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** ambient marketing, kreatywność, proces kreatywny, komunikacja mediowana elektronicznie, komunikacja „twarzą-w-twarz”, osiągnięcia kreatywne.