

## INNOVATIVE MARKETING TOOLS FOR STARTUP DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

### ІННОВАЦІЙНІ МАРКЕТИНГОВІ ІНСТРУМЕНТИ ДЛЯ РОЗВИТКУ СТАРТАПІВ У ЦИФРОВУ ЕПОХУ

*The article defined and characterized innovative marketing tools necessary for the successful implementation of startups in modern conditions. The marketing process for a startup was structured, which involved dividing it into several stages, depending on which certain digital marketing tools were used. It was proven that the development and implementation of measures for the formation and implementation of a startup marketing complex requires the development and implementation of an effective digital marketing model, which is due to modern trends. An analysis of the dynamics of Internet users in Ukraine in recent years, as well as an analysis of the dynamics of social network users, was carried out, which allowed us to substantiate the feasibility of promoting a startup in social networks, which are characterized by the greatest dynamics of user growth, and to identify key measures that will ensure the success of this kind of process. Given the importance of the process of forming a unique value proposition for the success of a startup, a step-by-step instruction for recommendations for its creation was proposed.*

**Ключові слова:** marketing, social media, startup, value proposition, competition.

*У статті визначено та здійснено характеристику інноваційних маркетингових інструментів необхідних для успішної реалізації стартапів в сучасних умовах. В сучасних умовах, стартапи слугуватимуть підґрунтям для швидкого економічного розвитку та повоєнного відновлення економіки України. Здійснено структурування маркетингового процесу для стартапу, яка передбачала його поділ на кілька етапів, в залежності від яких застосовуються ті чи інші інструменти цифрового маркетингу. Обґрунтовано, що збір інформації про потенційних або існуючих клієнтів є важливим етапом дослідження ринку і не тільки на етапі створення стартапу, а й протягом періоду його реалізації. Проаналізовано основні методи отримання зворотного зв'язку від споживачів потенційного стартапу. Доведено, що розробка та впровадження заходів щодо формування та впровадження комплексу маркетингу стартапу потребує розробки та запровадження ефективної моделі цифрового маркетингу, що обумовлено сучасними тенденціями. Здійснено аналіз динаміки інтернет-користувачів в Україні протягом останніх років, а також аналіз динаміки користувачів соціальних мереж, що дозволило обґрунтувати доцільність просування стартапу у соціальних мережах, для яких характерна найбільша динаміка зростання користувачів, та виокремити ключові заходи, які забезпечать успіх такого роду процесу. З огляду на важливість процесу формування унікальної ціннісної пропозиції для успіху стартапу запропоновано покрокову інструкцію для рекомендації для її створення. Виокремлено ключові критерії, яким повинна відповідати унікальна ціннісна пропозиція. На основі проведеного теоретичного аналізу обґрунтовано, що основним завданням стартапу є не тільки визначення ефективної ціннісної пропозиції, а її чітке донесення до цільової аудиторії. Встановлено, що важливим аспектом успіху стартапу є також перевірка ціннісної пропозиції перед презентацією для інвесторів та споживачів. В ході дослідження запропоновано методичку та шкалу оцінювання ціннісної пропозиції. Сформовано перелік основних помилок, яких зазвичай припускаються стартапери і як їх уникати.*

**Key words:** маркетинг, соціальні мережі, стартап, ціннісна пропозиція, конкуренція.

UDC 658.8:004.9:658.11

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32782/dees.16-60>

#### Hobela Volodymyr<sup>1</sup>

PhD in Economics, Associate Professor,  
Associate Professor at the Department  
of Management and Economic Security,  
Lviv State University of Internal Affairs  
**Ivanishyn Taras<sup>2</sup>**  
Postgraduate Student,  
Private Higher Educational Institution  
"European University"

#### Гобела В.В.

Львівський державний університет  
внутрішніх справ

#### Іванишин Т.Я.

Приватний вищий навчальний заклад  
«Європейський університет»

**Problem statement.** Startups are increasingly important in today's economy: their quick response, growth-oriented strategy, and high flexibility allow them to cope better with financial crises than larger companies, which react more slowly. Many governments in developed countries encourage the development of startups, for example, by simplifying regulations or providing special financial resources. In the United States, this entrepreneurial model has created more than three million new jobs and generated revenues of several hundred billion dollars. In Europe, the startup ecosystem is developing rapidly, especially in cities such as London, Berlin, and Paris, which provide a favourable business climate for new enterprises.

However, the growth of startups is primarily determined not so much by favourable business conditions or geographical location, but by the ability to identify customer problems and needs, offer the best value solutions on the market and establish high-quality communication with the target audience. As soon as an entrepreneur finds an effective approach to his customers, the probability of selling goods or services increases dramatically. Moreover, when a startup becomes recognizable among potential consumers and receives positive feedback, the demand for its products increases significantly, which contributes to improving the company's financial condition.

When a startup's product gains the trust of customers and is established in their minds, the

<sup>1</sup> ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7438-2329>

<sup>2</sup> ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-4316-8353>

startup acquires loyal customers who are ready to purchase this brand again, despite the advantages of competing products. The success of a startup and its chances for further growth also depend on the reputation of the brand and its owners among the target audience.

Marketing tools are used to address all of the above issues. Marketing is the ability to create conditions under which a customer will be happy to spend money on goods or services offered by a startup. The main marketing tasks for a startup include researching the opinions of potential customers, creating an optimal value proposition, and launching a product on the market. After that, the emphasis in marketing shifts to scaling by increasing brand awareness, gaining customer loyalty, and building a positive business reputation. These aspects are implemented through effective communication with customers and can include both traditional marketing methods – outdoor advertising, mass media (television, radio, print publications) and the latest strategies that have been actively implemented over the past decade.

**Literature review.** In the current conditions, scientists are increasingly focusing on the features of the successful implementation of startups. Such studies are primarily due to the growing role of digital marketing and the level of digitalization of social relations.

It is worth noting that scientists have paid attention to the study of potential directions of marketing development in the post-industrial period [2]. Moreover, researchers have studied and investigated models for assessing potential business risks, taking into account current trends, in particular, in particular Hnylytska L., Melnyk S., Nakonechna N. and others [1]. In the context of strategic management of enterprises, Hur'ianov A.B. drew attention to the assessment of the role of marketing and marketing tools in this process [3]. Researchers also paid attention to the study of theoretical and applied principles of improving marketing tools at the present stage [14]. Researchers Oklander M.A. and Romanenko O.O. paid attention to establishing the differences, advantages and disadvantages between digital marketing and Internet marketing [9]. Digital marketing as an innovative management tool became the subject of research by Marchuk O.O. [6]. The implementation and introduction of digital marketing and marketing in social networks and the role of social media in brand formation became the subject of scientific research by scientists Uholkovi O.Z. and Yatsiuka D.V. [7; 8].

**The purpose of the article.** To develop proposals for promoting the startup using modern marketing tools.

**Presentation of the main research material.** The basic process of marketing a startup consists of several stages. The implementation of the marketing process for a startup includes:

- defining the target audience.
- researching the target market.
- developing a more attractive value proposition for consumers (target audience).

Gathering information about potential or existing customers is an important stage of market research. In most cases, you can find a significant amount of data about your market, but sometimes this information can be contradictory, come from different sources, or be incomplete and insufficient for decision-making. In some cases, information may be completely absent. Therefore, you should consider how to conduct market research, as well as what tools and methods to use.

Market research is important not only at the stage of creating a startup. Even after launching a business, there is still a need to make adjustments, which may concern the introduction of new products, changes to existing ones, or even changes to the target market (for example, moving to another country, etc.). To get feedback from customers, it is advisable to use the following methods:

- conduct surveys;
- organize focus groups;
- provide an opportunity to test your product;
- listen to consumer feedback.

According to research [10; 11], many startups fail, especially when they are led by unprepared and unqualified teams. It is important to analyze the reasons that lead to startup bankruptcy and pay attention to the connection between these reasons and marketing.

For the effective operation of the marketing system, it is necessary to rely on scientifically proven main and auxiliary marketing tasks. Such a marketing management system will be effective when the startup management implements marketing tasks based on scientific research and aimed at ensuring maximum satisfaction of customer needs.

As a result of the analysis of the key tasks of marketing activities, we make a theoretical generalization that the development and implementation of measures for the formation and implementation of startup marketing requires the development and implementation of an effective digital marketing model. The next stage of our research will be the classification of digital marketing (table 1).

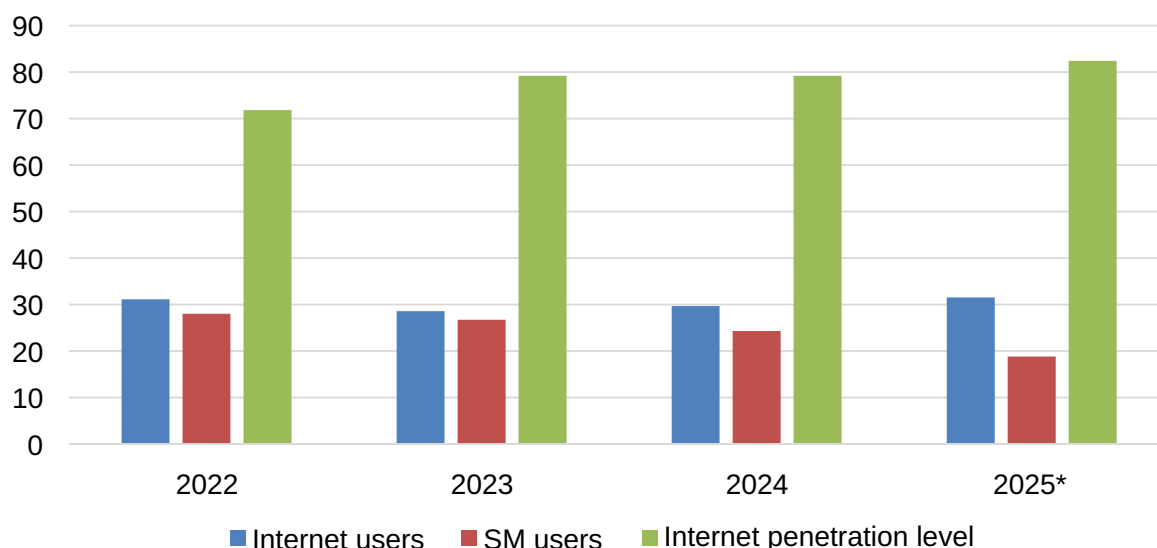
To choose a digital marketing tool, you should decide on the appropriateness of its use. To do this, we will analyze the dynamics of Internet users in Ukraine for the period 2022–2025 (fig. 1).

As the figure shows, the level of Internet penetration is constantly growing. The number of Internet users in Ukraine is growing steadily after a slight decrease in 2022–2023, which was due to the invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine. In contrast, the number of social media users in Ukraine, taking into account the 1st quarter of 2025, has increased significantly.

Table 1.

Digital Marketing Classification

Types	Theoretical content and practical significance
Advertising	Targeted, contextual, banner, native, viral, display advertising in digital marketing attracts the attention of the target audience
Retargeting	Works with users who have previously shown interest in a product or company. Retargeting serves as a reminder of the brand and re-engages the audience
SMM	SMM is aimed at attracting traffic from social networks
Mobile marketing	Performs the function of promotion using cellular communication
Sending advertisements	Carried out on users' mobile devices
Affiliate marketing	Promotion through partners, which occurs by mutual agreement. The intermediary receives a direct benefit, a reward for the attracted buyer
SEO promotion	Improving the company's website's ranking in user search queries
E-mail marketing	Retains previously acquired customers. This tool is recognized as the most effective to date
QR-codes	In addition to engaging the audience, it performs an analytical function: it helps analyze reviews



\* – data is as of March 2025 p.

Fig. 1. Dynamics of Internet users in Ukraine

Source: developed based on sources [12; 13]

As of January 2025, 21.6 million Ukrainians used social media, which corresponds to 56.4% of the population.

According to [12], the distribution of the audience in social media is presented in Figure 2.

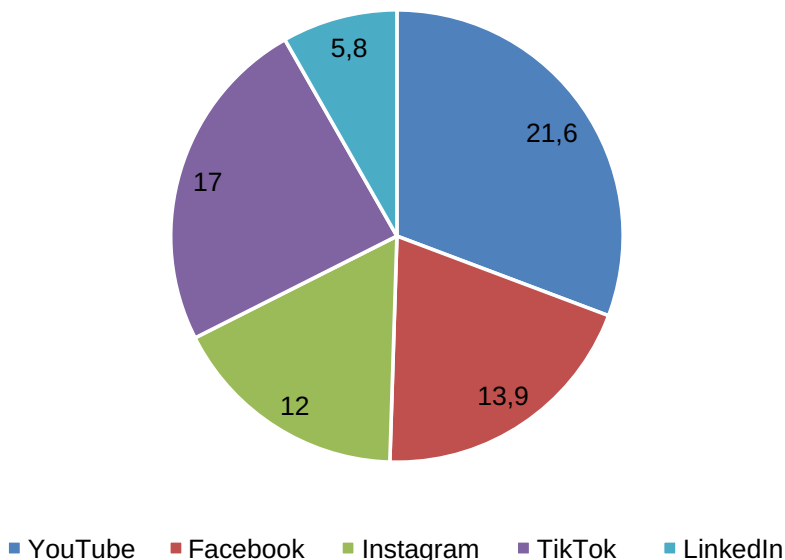
At the same time, it is worth noting that the majority of Ukrainians use the Google Chrome browser – 58%, followed by Microsoft Edge (15%) and Safari (10%). In the field of search, Google remains the undisputed leader – 85% of users search for information through this system. However, 11% still use the Russian Yandex, which is a significant challenge for the country's digital security.

Startups in the field of innovation and new technologies face unique challenges in terms of

marketing. One of the key tools for attracting attention and spreading messages in the modern world is social media. As a result of the analysis, we can identify the main SMM promotion activities that will help startups in this dynamic industry to succeed:

1. choosing the right social platforms;
2. creating targeted content;
3. attracting an audience through contests and surveys;
4. maintaining activity through constant content;
5. optimizing content for search engines.

Therefore, for the effective development and promotion of a startup, it is worth using marketing tools, in particular promotion in social networks, which is confirmed by the level of popularity of social media



**Fig. 2. Number of users on social networks (millions of users)**

Source: developed based on source [12]

among consumers. Accordingly, the product strategy of a startup consists, first of all, in forming a unique value proposition for customers.

In general, startup marketing is based on a value proposition, which should be the focus of attention of both the startup owner and the entire team. Otherwise, the client may prefer the product of another company. It is important to note that in reality, the value proposition includes not only the benefits of the product that solve customer problems, but also the social responsibility of the business, as well as aspects such as service, guarantees, staff courtesy and ease of access to products, etc. All this helps to solve customer problems and facilitates their interaction with the company.

Unique value is what the company promises to provide to its customers. Based on the analysis of scientific works [6; 7; 9; 14], a step-by-step guide to creating a startup's value proposition has been developed. So:

Step 1. The essence of the value proposition.

Step 2. Transforming the value proposition into a unique one.

Step 3. Defining the ideal customer.

Step 4: Establishing the value of the product for the customer, indicating the benefits for the customer.

It is also worth noting that for a startup's value proposition to be clear and concise, it must meet the following criteria:

1. Relevance.

2. Differentiation.

3. The unique value proposition (UVP) should be the first thing visitors notice on the site.

The final stage of forming a value proposition is its evaluation through the benefit/inconvenience ratio.

Many entrepreneurs focus only on the functions of their product and do not pay enough attention to the process of using it. This can make it difficult to train customers in using the product. Thus, evaluating the benefit/inconvenience ratio consists of comparing the benefits that the product provides with the "pain", costs and stress that the consumer faces. The startup must ensure that the benefits of using the product significantly exceed the inconvenience and stress associated with its acquisition and use.

From the point of view of marketing communications (advertising), the product value proposition should be transmitted through all available channels used by the startup: website, social networks, interviews, etc.

Studies conducted by various organizations show [10; 12; 13] that the main task of the company is to define an effective value proposition and clearly communicate it to the target audience. After developing the value proposition, it should be tested by presenting it to a potential client and analyzing the feedback.

If the formed value proposition is not among the top three on this scale, it is worth critically evaluating your product and its positioning. To obtain information about the behavior of demand, you can apply the value proposition assessment methodology, namely:

– determine how desirable your product is for the client.

– assess the uniqueness of the value proposition in the market.

– multiply the two obtained values.

If the final number is less than 2, you should return to the value proposition formation stage.

In the field of startup marketing, founders often make mistakes, which is quite normal. The task of

a startuper is to try different marketing approaches until you find the most effective tools for promoting your products or services in the chosen market. If a startuper ignores marketing mistakes, he risks being among the 14% of startups that failed due to a poor marketing strategy. Accordingly, as a result of theoretical analysis and critical analysis of scientific sources [3; 7; 8; 9], the most common mistakes in the world of startups were identified, including:

- poor value proposition;
- ignoring the importance of marketing and professional branding;
- copying competitors;
- incorrect definition of the target audience;
- low-quality content in marketing communications.

**Conclusions.** Therefore, the founder of a startup should prepare a plan on which social networks and platforms will present information about their project. It is worth dividing such sites into those that are mandatory for the business and those that depend on a specific business model. It is important not to forget about regular analysis after the start of the startup's promotion. This will allow you to understand which strategies work and which do not, and identify possible directions for further development.

To achieve success in social networks, you need to present an attractive offer through effective channels to graduates who will appreciate it, in places where they can read it. When advertising your project, it is important to choose platforms where users will willingly accept paid advertising.

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