

HOW TO SELL IDEAS



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General information

As part of the project ECY (Effective Communication for Youth), which we are presenting as a project about external communication, a 3-day intensive event took place during the so-called PEKO (namely, 'Autumn Esperanto Conference' — the main one in Belgium) in Amougies.

Contents

First concepts

- **Information:** knowledge given from one side about something. There is no terminological consideration regarding a two-way communication.
- **Marketing:** a branch that systematically studies how to sell and rule, acting both in and out of the organisation. There is a great deal of possible definitions and it can be changed according to the subbranches and the spirit of the times (it's possible to compare the definitions of the marketing mixture with four variables and seven with it).
- **Advertising:** the act of calling public attention to a product

Value and usefulness

The value you are ready to pay is subjective. For instance, both a Rolex and a 20-dollar watch are useful to know what time is, but they have a different value. Moreover, they are bought by a different kind of people. Another example is either a gasoline-powered car or an electric one.

Classifying goods

According to Philip Kotler, there are ten main kinds of goods:

- Products
- Services
- Experiences
- Events
- People
- Places
- Possessions
- Organisations
- Information
- Ideas

When we sell Esperanto, we have to identify which goods we promise to transfer. A general recommendation is selling mostly the community rather than the language itself.

Social Marketing

In 1952 G. D. Wiebe asked the question “Why can't you sell brotherhood like you sell soap?” The difference between the current marketing and the newborn subbranch is essentially:

	1)	2)	3)
Marketing	Selling somehow superior (also e.g. identifying) or more accessible goods.	Own interest	Foccus on goods
Social marketing	A lot of additional work (awareness)	External and indirect profit	Foccus on behaviours
Example of a comparison	Nuclear central / Panel about sun	Exploitation / Fair commerce of coffee grains	Water / condoms

Efficient generosity

The belief according to which “the more people we inform about Esperanto, the closer we are to the *finis venko* (i.e. “final victory” as the predominant second language)” might be correct, but it is not necessarily so. Systematic changes, such as the introduction of Esperanto in schools, are more efficient.

We have limited resources; we must look for the maximum results by means of them. In brief, an intention is not useful without a method, and marketing provides that method.

Values Pyramid

This new model (Bain & Company Inc., 2015) helps us see what the value of what we sell is.

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SOCIAL IMPACT



Self-transcendence

LIFE CHANGING



Provides hope



Self-actualization



Motivation



Heirloom



Affiliation/
belonging

EMOTIONAL



Reduces anxiety



Rewards me



Nostalgia



Design/
aesthetics



Badge value



Wellness



Therapeutic value



Fun/
entertainment



Attractiveness



Provides access

FUNCTIONAL



Saves time



Simplifies



Makes money



Reduces risk



Organizes



Integrates



Connects



Reduces effort



Avoids hassles



Reduces cost



Quality



Variety



Sensory appeal



Informs

Profit vs. Advantage

When we say that Esperanto is easier, why should that motivate people to learn it? We have to communicate the benefits in order to connect with people and motivate them, for instance, the fact that you can finally put an end to your monolingualism. Here are some key concepts:

- **Characteristic:** what the goods objectively have.
- **Advantage:** characteristics which make the goods better in comparison with the competition.
- **Benefit:** what subjectively satisfies a necessity or desire.

OUR RESTAURANT			
MOTIVATION	CHARACTERISTIC	ADVANTAGE	BENEFIT
Enjoyment during the meal	Great variety of food.	It's possible to identify more tastes Higher probability of making a good choice as there are several options	More enjoyment while eating Guaranteed enjoyable eating
...

Necessity pyramid

In 1943 Abraham Maslow created a model explaining that people have several kinds of necessities in a hierarchical order, thus fulfilling the more basic ones before the highest ones can be fulfilled (other authors have shown their criticism regarding this point).

Self-actualisation

↑

Esteem

↑

Social

↑

Safety

↑

Body-related

Necessities and desires

There is a discussion among scholars about the concepts. In our training we have used an approach that, according to us, helps us more to understand marketing, and that is less close to the opinion of the general non-specialised public:



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- **Necessity:** feeling of a physical or psychological lack of something.
- **Desire:** a way of expressing how to satisfy the need.

Behaviour

When someone supports Esperanto, he can do this as an attitude ("I like the idea") or as a behaviour ("I'm learning it"). In order to change the behaviour, we must, on the one hand, give more motivation ("you will travel for free for training in another country") and on the other hand, make the action easier ("there will be an intensive one-week course for you to travel next month").

The basic value formula is:

$$\text{Value} = \text{Benefits} - \text{Costs}$$

Where can the benefits be? For example, new friends, costs, the comparison with other alternatives, plus the cost of convenience (what wouldn't I do if I spent time to learn Esperanto?).

Value Perception

When we say that Esperanto is spoken by many people around the world, it's not easy to believe that. There is a difference between the value perception (that which is considered valuable) and the value proposal (what we "propose"). We must identify which are the important things of Esperanto that are perceived very differently and how we can present this in a different way in order to bring a proposal closer to a perception.

Measurement

What we do not measure is in fact smoke. For how can we know if something works, and if something does work better than something else? Just by changing one single element, the result can be dramatically changed, and when we take certain information into account, we can know and make demonstrate that. Sometimes it happens that a similar activity works in some places and not in others, but why does that happen? The answer may not be as obvious as "because that happened in a different country". For instance, compare the difference between a stand with a poster in the national language and another stand with a poster in Esperanto (yes, that happens) advertising Esperanto. Therefore, we have to think of ways of measuring our activity even if in small social organisations this is usually done more informally than formally.

Why does the movement (un)grow? It is possible to say for example that it is because there are more interested people who are not friends of the already existing Esperantists.

Sales Funnel

This model creates a pattern of the steps that we have to experience in accordance to our convenience, and they are actions that must be done. For example, one first learns about Esperanto in order to learn it later.



Trust and relations

It is easier to convince someone with whom you already have a good relationship. You can use your acquaintances' relationships.

Percentage profit

Do not expect everyone attending a lecture to learn Esperanto, even if they have a supporting attitude about the idea.

And regarding the people who *are* interested, we have to keep a tracking, because that will increase the percentage gain. For example, there might be a person who cannot learn Esperanto now because he is in his exam period, but later on he will be available and, if you do not remind him and offer something, maybe this potential Esperantist will never get started.

Levels of goods

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According to an invented model, there are four categories of goods. Here's an example of a car:

- BASIC: motion
- EXPECTED: boot of the car
- IMPROVED: air conditioner
- POTENTIAL: ecological engine

The lesson for us is that what we can consider as expected (for example, that a language has speakers) can be considered by our public as only potential.

Medium

In our medium there are things which we can easily change, such as the place where we give a lecture; that is the so-called *micro-medium*. At the same time there are other things that we can really hardly change (for example the perception that English is spoken by everybody in the world); that is the so-called *macro-medium*. We have not only to foccus on the first one but also to take care of the second one, for which the PESTEL (political, economic, social, technological, ecological, legal) model is used.

Classifying factors

How to divide the public according to variables? We need to identify which ones are pertinent to us and which ones are not:

- **Geographical**
 - Country
 - Climate
 - ...
- **Social**
 - Age
 - Sex
 - ...
- **Psychological profile***
 - Lifestyle
 - Personality
 - ...
- **Behaviour**
 - Trademark fidelity

- Awareness

...

Messages for target groups

It requires more time to process different messages for different target groups, but the result within each target group and the overall result will be more positive. In addition mass messages work less well, and now worse than in the past.

The Expertise Argument

One of the most effective types of arguments we can use is the one including a personal charge, for example, how Esperanto has helped us talk with people with whom you can only communicate in this language and from places you might never have discovered without it, or how Esperanto has changed your world perception.

False arguments

There are arguments with a false basis but which can be convincing. We must identify them when they are used against us, and we have to anticipate them, but we can also use them to convince.

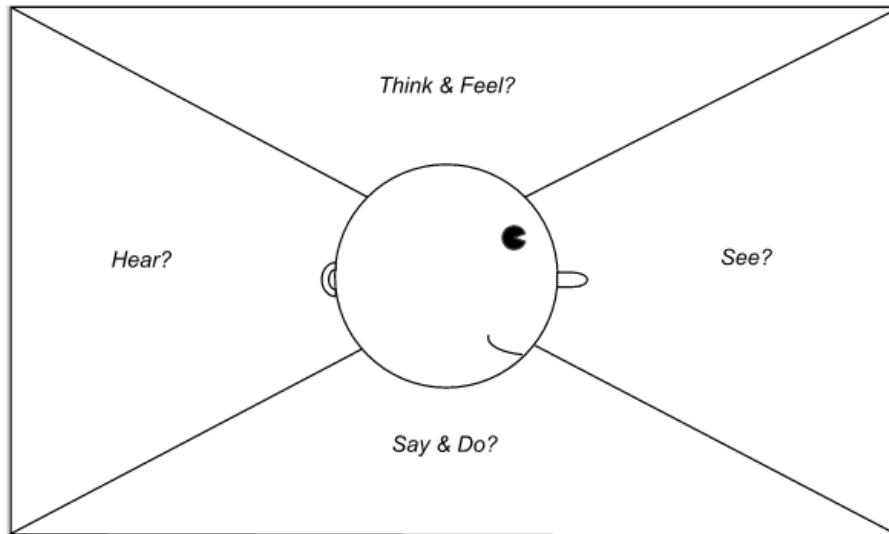
We've seen a few:

- Socially pushing: "everyone knows no one speaks Esperanto".
- Branch petty argument: "if everyone spoke Esperanto, no one would speak national languages any more".
- People-attacking: "Stalin stood for Esperanto, so it's a bad language."
- Authoritarian: "Linguists say that Esperanto is a clumsy language, therefore it's like that."
- The scarecrow: "In Yugoslavia there was a common language but they killed each other!"
- The Nirvana argument: "Everyone speaks English, so we do not need Esperanto".

Empathy map

To empathize and approach the perception of our target group, we showed a picture of a Esperanto stand and used a simplified empathy map. The empathy map consists of a description of what a hypothetical person sees, hears, thinks, and does in the situation.

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Cognitive framework

A cognitive framework is an elementary reference mechanism to have a clear and immediate idea of what is happening. It defines a battlefield and according to the needs we have to go out creating another one to be able to defeat the opponent. For example, about abortion:

- Left-handed people: right to decide
- Right-handed people: right to live

For example, for our context it would be a bad field for us "Esperanto is artificial", and the alternative framework can be "Esperanto is a fair language".

Categorisation technique

Create an image of the person you speak to and toss into him the idea: "I see you as a man who defends democratic values and rights. Esperanto supports the same principles, so I think that democrats as you should support Esperanto".

The minimalist/maximalist technique

According to an absolute comparison, it can be said that "no one speaks Esperanto" taking as logical the fact that so few people speak it that there are practically no speakers. In order to create a more favorable image we can, in relative comparison, create a framework that is the best one among the worst ones: "Esperanto is the most popular planned language in the world".

The AIDA model

Advertising messages must generally follow the following phases to be effective:

A (Attention)



I (interest)



D (Desire)



A (Action)

The mistake many of us make is directly asking the question "Do you know what Esperanto is?" instead of attracting the attention in another way, since this question by itself cannot arise any interest.

Say yes

There is an important question we must be conscious of when we contend: "what would make you say YES?" We must understand and become aware of the barriers, also psychological, in which people object to accepting our goal, for example, that they start learning Esperanto.

Proving the facts

Do not provide any facts that you cannot somehow prove. Own experience itself can also be used as proof.

Expectations and reality

A common reason for which people stop being enthusiastic about Esperanto is because it is not as easy as it was promised: "only 16 rules", "the easiest language in the world." It is better to promise less and deliver more value. In the case of using the two previous arguments, we could also add that it "bases itself" on 16 rules, and that Esperanto is "yet a language that requires an effort for being learned".

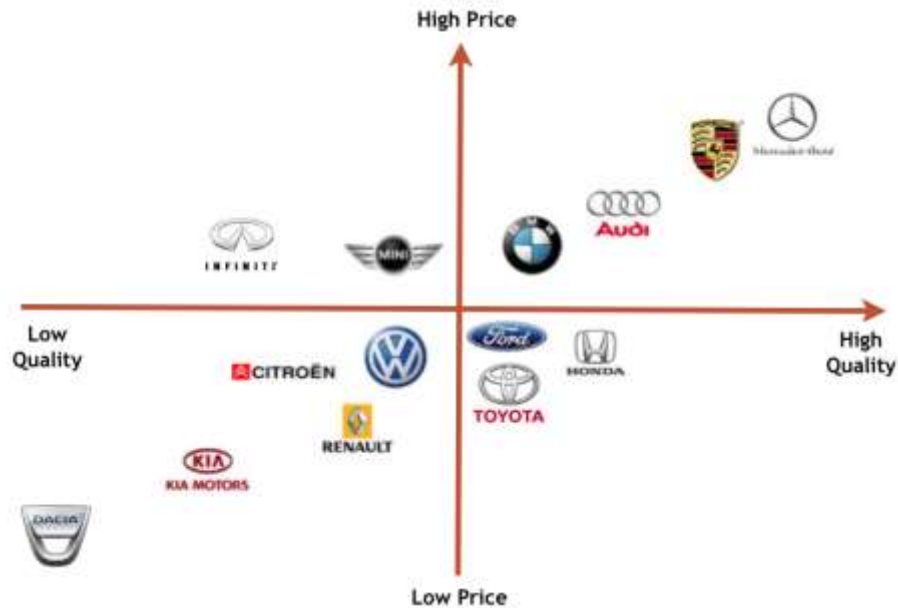
Kernel-Periphery strategy

There is not only one reason to learn Esperanto. Moreover, they also change over time. We can identify kernel (main) and peripheral (complementary) reasons to learn or use the language. We can follow this same principle for other discussions; If there is a disagreement, we have to give up a few non-important arguments, not the main ones, because we have to defend what we believe, but the audience wants to feel that it also says accurate things and that, at least in part, it is right.

Positional mapping

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This other model exists to identify variables (axes) on which mentally to position goods. We need to find the crushing variables that are important to our public but at the same time make us win.



Identity of arguments

The arguments that we use for Esperanto (universal, easy, new friends ...) are already used for English. Let's be aware about this and think of how Esperanto's arguments can be superior.