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АДАПТАЦІЯ ЕЛЕКТРОННОЇ КОМЕРЦІЇ B2C ДО УМОВ ПАНДЕМІЇ COVID-19**Kysh L.M.**

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ADAPTATION OF B2C E-COMMERCE TO THE CONDITIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Abstract. The e-commerce market is a sector of the economy that is developing dynamically in recent decades, due to the active introduction of ICT in modern society. Modern businesses are gradually moving to trade via the Internet to expand their capabilities, but until now, there were many businesses that preferred traditional trade. The outbreak of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has significantly affected this area, and especially B2C trade, due to the need for social distancing. It should be noted that this economic shock has not only negative aspects for business, including e-business, but also opportunities for development. Therefore, there is a question of selection of measures of adaptation to new restrictions of external environment and new needs of consumers, which would provide not only survival in the existing conditions, but also prosperity. The purpose of the article is to select a set of measures for the adaptation of Ukrainian enterprises in the field of e-commerce B2C to the threats and opportunities that have arisen in the context of COVID-19. The article identifies the place of e-commerce in e-business. The main forms of e-commerce are indicated and the essence of B2C commerce is substantiated. The list of key players of the global B2C e-commerce market and the main participants in the Ukrainian market is given. The volume of the global B2C e-commerce market in 2019 is indicated. Data on market volume and share in GDP by European countries in 2019 are presented. The main limitations that stand in the way of dynamic development of e-commerce enterprises are identified. The tendency of change of B2C e-commerce efficiency indicators during February 17 – September 9, 2020 is analyzed. The main challenges facing modern enterprises in the field of e-commerce and priority areas for efficiency are identified. A set of measures for adaptation of Ukrainian B2C e-commerce enterprises to the conditions of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic is proposed, namely six groups: data collection and processing, costs and efficiency, value proposition, priority promotion channels, customer attraction and retention strategy, pricing and promotions.

Keywords: e-commerce, B2C, COVID-19, adaptation of enterprises, consequences of the pandemic, efficiency of e-commerce, measures for adaptation, e-commerce in Ukraine.

The problem statement. The e-commerce market is an economic sector that has been dynamically developing recently due to the active introduction of ICT in modern society. Modern companies are gradually switching to the Internet to expand their capabilities. However, there were lots of businesses preferring traditional trade.

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has significantly affected this area, especially B2C trade. It has been caused by the need for social distancing. It should be noted that this foreign economic shock has both negative and positive aspects for business, including e-business. It has also provided opportunities for development. So, there is a need to select measures to adapt to new environmental constraints and new consumer needs ensuring both survival in existing conditions and prosperity.

Analysis of recent research and publications. Domestic and foreign scientists are actively researching the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business realities in 2020. The Chinese scientists Gao X., Shi X., Guo H. and Liu Y. [1] have studied the issue of e-commerce in China; they concluded that consumers prefer to order food online in quarantine. H.

Androschuk [2] studied the change in online income of Ukrainian enterprises compared to the period before the coronavirus pandemic. A. Skoriukova [3] researches the need to intensify e-commerce. N. Boreiko. and N. Paranytsia [4] propose to introduce tax holidays for B2C e-commerce for the period of the pandemic. M. Stepanenko [5] gives general pieces of advice on the development of e-commerce in a pandemic. The Cabinet of Ministers Program [6] to stimulate the economy to overcome the effects of the epidemic COVID-19 indicates the importance of e-commerce, provides a list of tasks to prevent a deepening crisis. Despite the fact that the activity of e-commerce enterprises is quite actively analyzed by scientists, there is a need to select a set of adaptive measures for B2C commerce as the most affected by this foreign economic shock.

The aim of the article (statement of the problem). The aim of the article is to select a set of measures for the Ukrainian enterprises' adaptation in B2C e-commerce to the threats and opportunities arisen in the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main part. E-commerce involves buying and selling of goods or services through a global network,

and the transfer of money and data to carry out these transactions. E-commerce is often used to denote the sale of physical goods on the Internet, but it can also describe any commercial transaction carried out over the Internet.

E-business refers to all aspects of doing business on the Internet, e-commerce refers specifically to transactions with goods and services. According to the WTO E-Commerce Work Program, the term e-commerce means the production, distribution, marketing, sale or delivery of goods and services by electronic means [7].

The history of e-commerce begins with the first online sales. On August 11, 1994, a man sold a Sting CD to his friend through his website NetMarket (American retail platform) [8]. E-commerce has evolved to make it easier to find and purchase products through online stores and trading platforms since 1994. Independent freelancers, small businesses and large corporations have been able to sell their products and services on a scale that was impossible in traditional retail.

Nowadays, there are many forms of e-commerce depending on the interaction of different groups of entities. They are C2C (consumer – to – consumer), B2B (business – to – business), B2E (business – to – employee), B2G (business – to –government) and B2C (business – to – consumer) [9]. According to Chan-khi O.S., Ozemblovskiyi V.O., it is a form of e-commerce, their purpose is direct sales to the consumer [10].

The key players operating in the global B2C e-commerce market are Alibaba (China), Amazon.com, Inc. (USA) and eBay. Inc. (USA). The Ukrainian B2C

market is represented by Olx.ua (7.4 million users), Rozetka.com.ua (6 million users), Prom.ua (4.9 million users) and Ria.com (2.3 million users) [11].

Formed players are not always competitors. B2C e-commerce participants have huge potential in niche and local fragmentation, as in any emerging market. The winning formulas vary for international multi-channel distributors, themed online stores, specific transaction aggregators or closed retailers.

The global B2C e-commerce market was estimated at \$ 3356.02 billion in 2019, and is expected to reach \$ 3667.04 billion in 2020. The ten largest e-commerce markets in the world are the United States, China, Great Britain, Japan, Germany, France, Canada, Italy, Spain, and Korea [12].

The European B2C e-commerce market amounted to 621 billion euros in 2019, with the largest share in the UK. The Ukrainian market still lags behind the vast majority of European countries. However, online sales revenue is 1.9% of GDP; it is more than in Germany, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, Hungary and Luxembourg (Fig. 1).

COVID-19 has a significant impact on the global e-commerce. As a result, e-commerce is growing rapidly due to the virus. Coronavirus has forced customers to use the Internet and make it a habit in their daily routine [1]. There are many new challenges faced by e-commerce retailers, i.e. extended delivery times, traffic control difficulties, social distance and blocking. Nowadays the process of shipment and delivery is quite slow, but people still buy online because they have no other alternative. So, people are moving towards technology because of the virus.

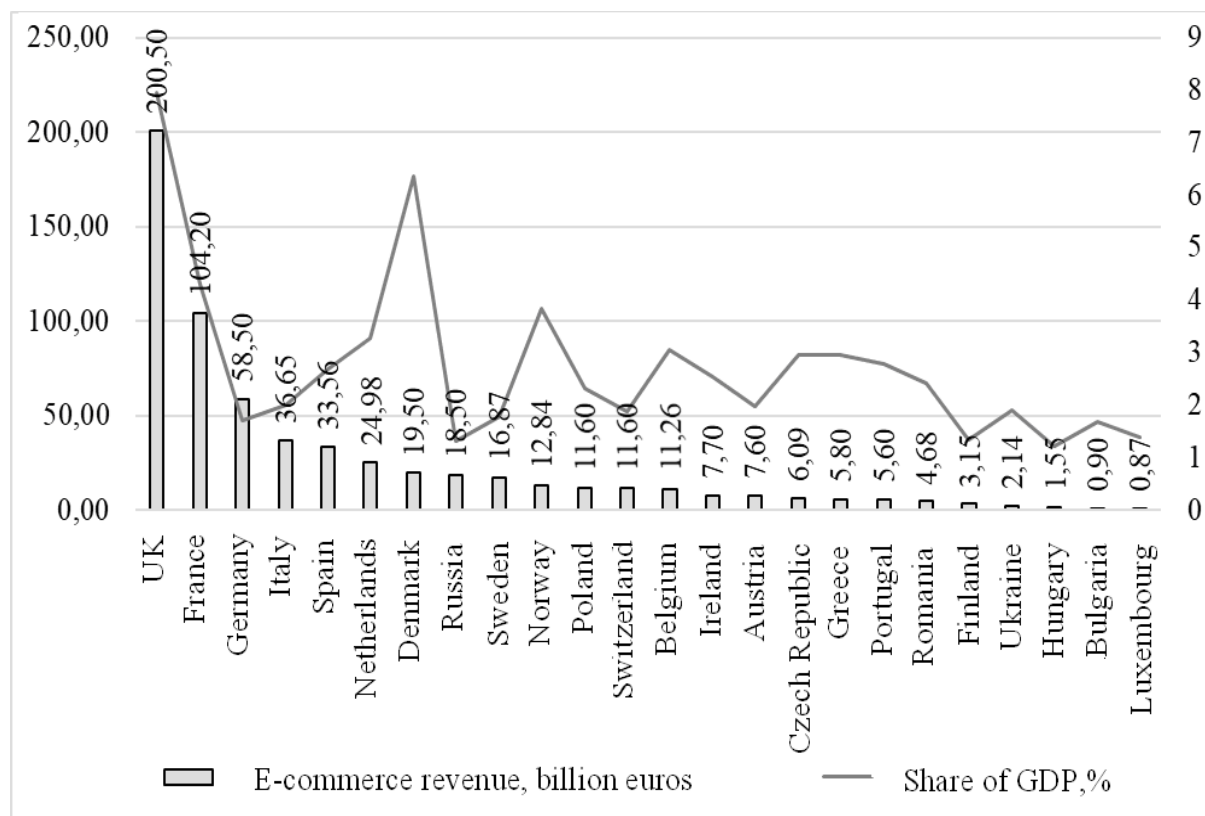


Fig.1. The size of the B2C e-commerce market by country in Europe in 2019

Source: based on data [13]

Nowadays, some products are very popular in the market. Even retailers cannot meet customer requirements such as hand sanitizers, toilet paper, disposable gloves, groceries, and dairy products. E-commerce platforms delivering essentials were in high demand during the first weeks of the COVID-19 epidemic. However, the growing rigidity of COVID-19 around the world has forced the governments of large countries to lock down affecting sales from B2C e-commerce platforms.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of global e-commerce has increased significantly within 28 weeks of the peak of the epidemic in China. Fig. 2 shows the weekly changes in the efficiency of B2C e-commerce compared to the pre-crisis period (average level for the period from January 6, 2020 to February 16, 2020). The data indicate that the peak period for global e-commerce was the period from the ninth to eleventh weeks of the global pandemic, i.e. from April 13, 2020 to May 3, 2020.

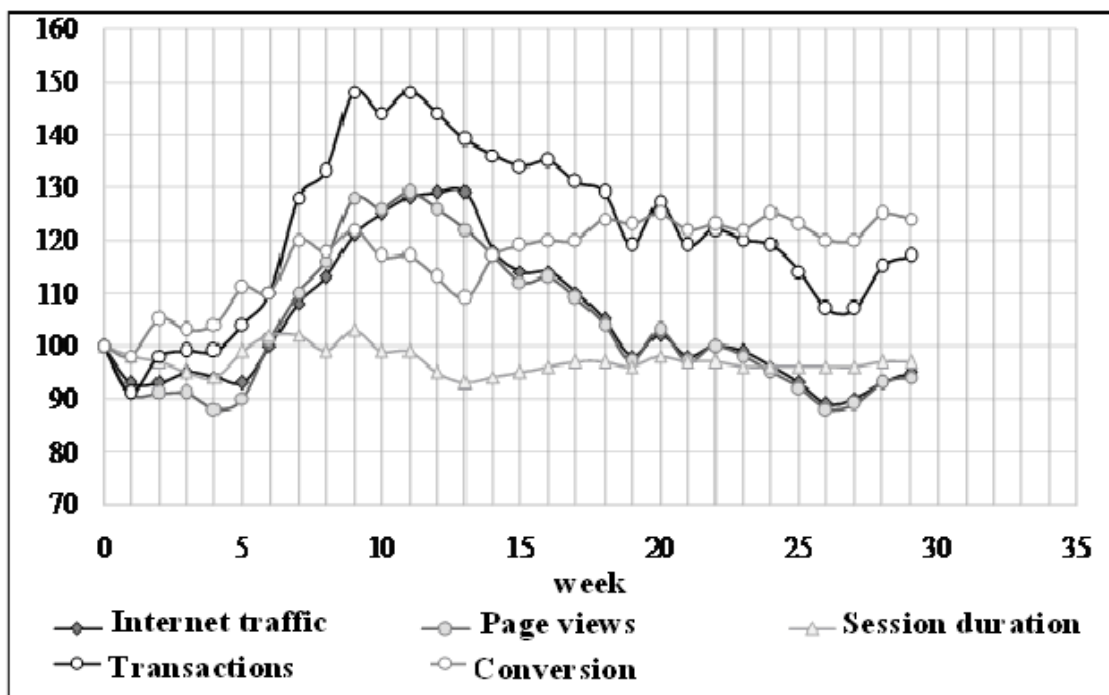


Fig.2. B2C Global E-Commerce Performance Indicators from February 17, 2020 to September 9, 2020
Source: based on data [14]

The COVID-19 crisis is unlike any other foreign economic shock in the history of the modern world. Leaders of countries, organizations and enterprises face a tough choice with an unprecedented level of uncertainty. Although short-term orientation is key, it is becoming increasingly clear that the crisis will shape the social and economic order of the future, as it has been with other historical crises. Despite the significant negative impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the global economy, it is a stimulus to the development of e-commerce. It is an impetus for the introduction of e-commerce in the activities of enterprises that have delayed the transition to online format for ages. Adaptation to new environmental requirements determines survival or bankruptcy for many businesses due to the urgent need for social distancing. The companies able to reorganize their activities to ensure sales through the Internet have a chance to prosper in the post-crisis period.

Businesses that invest in directing their business to behavioral change in a timely manner can capture market share and become market leaders after a pandemic. This period is considered to be the best time to intensify the digital market, which will provide

competitive advantages in the short term and in the long run.

The current situation is evolving rapidly and proposals may become obsolete at the same pace as the pandemic, the question is what conclusions can be drawn in the context of e-commerce. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it clear that e-commerce can be an important tool / solution for consumers in times of crisis; it is also an economic factor. However, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital technologies in general and several vulnerabilities around the world. Thus, the WTO information letter states a list of urgent issues, namely [15]:

a) Should new and practical e-commerce solutions that will allow goods and services to cross borders quickly and safely as ways to recover economically and create jobs after the COVID-19 pandemic be considered?

b) Network bandwidth was crucial during the pandemic for e-commerce and economic inclusion. They have demonstrated their role in providing basic services to less affluent communities. What can WTO members do to improve communication networks and services?

c) What can the WTO do to promote e-commerce in developing countries to reduce the digital gap and help economies that are more resilient to possible future crises or shocks?

d) Are there additional e-commerce measures in the WTO that can be taken to help SMEs?

Modern e-commerce companies face challenges in choosing the right technology, converting visitors into customers, generating targeted traffic, customer support, localizing payment methods, finding the right partners, finding additional sales channels, hiring talent, combating fraud and withdrawing payments. According to a 2Checkout (leading universal

monetization platform that allows companies to quickly expand internationally and optimize periodic revenue streams through channels, simplifying the complex conditions created by modern digital commerce) research, the priority areas for B2C e-commerce are customer experience, analytics, new products, marketing automation, logistics and delivery, brand building and awareness building, content marketing, shopping cart optimization, social networking, targeting and personalization [2Checkout].

We believe that the effective use of e-commerce potential is possible if a set of measures consisting of six groups will be implemented (Fig. 3).

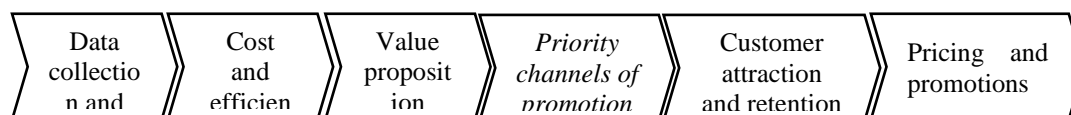


Figure 3. Groups of measures for adaptation of Ukrainian enterprises in the field of B2C e-commerce *
* – developed by the author

The first group involves data collection and processing. Before thinking about changing business activities in response to the crisis, companies should assess the immediate situation, its impact on business and industry, as well as the value and position of the company in this context. Therefore, this group covers the following measures to identify trends in consumer perceptions, attitudes and demand:

- feedback analysis, impulse research of consumer attitudes and customer service activities to identify changing needs (for example, for new categories of goods (services), guarantees, return rules);
- tracking the evolution of consumer trends within and between product categories and attributes;
- operational analysis of daily sales to determine changes in the combination of channels (for example, address delivery against Click & collect), sales at the DMA level (Direct Memory Access) and attributes of the product and / or range;
- identification of critical changes in customer behavior;
- development of the indicators table and a tracking mechanism to summarize data on customers, suppliers, finances and market conditions for a weekly review;
- use multiple external data sources to quickly respond to consumer preferences changes.

The second group concerns the review of current commercial activities (sales – communications – costs). The actions financed or carried out to promote commercial products or services include advertising, private parties, meetings of private companies or organizations etc. This group covers the following list of necessary measures:

- review of planned actions and proposals to ensure relevance and compliance with the current situation;
- conducting a review of operating and non-operating monthly marketing costs to determine the impact of each on current sales and optimization;

- analysis of current media activities to understand current efficiency, costs and planned activities because channels and return on investment change significantly;
- determining the impact of all commercial monthly costs (fixed and variable) on current sales;
- formation of an updated policy and sales program based on the identified priorities to ensure cost efficiency.

The third group allows you to determine how the current value proposition is consistent with the immediate needs of consumers. A value proposition is a message that states the clear, measurable, and evidential benefits that consumers receive when purchasing a particular product or service. This should convince consumers that this product or service is better than others on the market. This offer can lead to a competitive advantage when consumers choose a particular product or service among other competitors because they perceive greater value. Therefore, the company faces the need for the following measures:

- reassessment of the current value proposition to identify aspects meeting the new requirements of the external environment and consumer needs;
- identifying characteristics to be emphasized in the updated value proposition taking into account current trends in consumer needs (e.g., safety and hygiene).

The fourth group concerns priority promotion channels with high traffic. Both the message sent to the potential customer and the chosen channel of its delivery are important in the process of communication between the company and consumers. The message should indicate the corporate responsibility of the company in terms of COVID-19, i.e. emphasize the health, safety and support of employees and customers of the company. This group covers the following activities:

- tracking the growth of digital volume and capabilities, ensuring a balance between targeting high-intentioned consumers and increasing CPA (Cost Per Action);

– ensuring full coverage of the sales funnel bottom (i.e. facilitating the transition of site visitors to buyer status); an e-commerce product must meet the demand query, i.e. it is necessary to identify the largest traffic of current search queries for the product and redirect it;

– providing adequate customer experience on the Internet for scarce goods in high demand, notifying customers of restrictions on product availability at the time of purchase;

– moving to the sales funnel bottom for surplus goods, i.e. focusing on customers with a high level of consumer commitment.

The fifth group involves adjusting the strategy of attracting and retaining customers in accordance with the new requirements. It requires the development of a better understanding of the needs and opportunities to meet them, i.e.

– focus on acquiring and joining new customers for specific segments and locations, and considering increasing digital search, social media, and media channels such as podcasts for high-demand products and demand generators;

– sell to loyal customers using cost-effective message delivery channels (e.g. e-mail) to maintain interest for surplus goods.

Focusing on personalization and loyalty is an important aspect of customer engagement in a pandemic. Thus, it is advisable to use personalization to deliver interesting, relevant content (not necessarily related to sales in the near future) to maintain the attention and interest of consumers.

It is important to focus on optimization and efficiency adjusting the strategy. This aspect involves testing the feasibility of measures for certain goods. The process is complicated by the fact that COVID-19 has made its adjustments, so the analytical data on the pre-pandemic period are unusable.

The sixth group is pricing and promotions. Demand for some products has increased and for others has declined since a pandemic; it is advisable to update product segmentation based on new ways of buying (for example, which products have a key value proposition and which require competitive prices). The effectiveness of advertising must be constantly re-evaluated during the crisis (on a weekly basis). The classic efficiency should be complemented by rapid research on consumer sentiment, on the basis of which the following decisions should be made:

– eliminate promotions creating losses for possible inelastic purchases for low-demand goods;

– eliminate promotions creating losses for possible inelastic purchases for goods in high demand (and potential shortage);

It is important to consider alternative options for shares, i.e. their formation should be based on variable plans for promotion and pricing based on trends in consumer traffic and response measures of competitors.

It should be noted that promotions will be effective if the urgent needs are promoted, i.e. goods with such attributes that are more relevant to the current situation (e.g. family shopping, value orientation, individual packaging, high flexibility services,

attractive return and cancellation conditions order). The goods that currently acting as demand generators should be promoted according to the updated accents, which should stimulate the purchase of this enterprise.

It is advisable to work with supply chain companies to understand the expected inventory items and assess the risk of obsolescence for B2C e-commerce companies with inventory. Thus, promotions should be discontinued for insignificant stocks, consideration should be given to accelerating margins and moving to deeper promotions.

Conclusions. The COVID-19 is a foreign economic shock shaken the world economy in early 2020; it still limits global economic development. New realities of life require social distancing and make new demands on doing business. However, it is the perfect time for progressive development for e-commerce and B2C.

We suggest that the adaptation of Ukrainian enterprises in the field of e-commerce B2C to the conditions of COVID-19 is based on rapid response to new consumer needs, promotion of corporate responsibility, as well as the implementation of those measures that best ensure economic efficiency.

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РАЗВИТИЕ ЛОГИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ В ЭКОНОМИКЕ РЕГИОНА

*Irina Kovaleva**Doctor of Econ.sc., Prof.**Russia, Barnaul**Altai State Agrarian University*

DEVELOPMENT OF LOGISTIC ACTIVITIES IN THE ECONOMY OF THE REGION

Аннотация. Трансформация рыночных отношений, развитие цифровой экономики и ряд других преобразований в мировой экономике предопределило ряд тенденций развития логистической инфраструктуры и ее приоритетных направлений - транспортно-складской логистики (далее ТСЛ). Экономическая результативность логистики проявляется в оптимизации производственных процессов, сокращении издержек, повышении уровня конкурентоспособности организаций.

Abstract. The transformation of market relations, the development of the digital economy and a number of other transformations in the global economy predetermined a number of trends in the development of logistics infrastructure and its priority areas - transport and warehouse logistics (hereinafter TSL). The economic efficiency of logistics is manifested in the optimization of production processes, cost reduction, and an increase in the level of competitiveness of organizations.

Ключевые слова: логистическая, деятельность, эффективность, регион, развитие.

Key words: logistics, activity, efficiency, region, development.

Логистическая концепция рассматривается многими учеными-экономистами как системный взгляд на эффективное функционирование предприятия на основе оптимизации движения и использования материальных потоков [3].

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