

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

1. Title of the dissertation: The Process of Shaping Native Advertising in Online Marketing Communication Strategy: An Ethogenic Approach
2. Author: mgr Tomasz Olchawa
3. Supervisor: dr hab. Paweł Chlipała, prof. UEK
4. Summary (min. 1 800 characters with spaces):

The doctoral dissertation addresses the issue of the process of shaping native advertising as a tool of marketing communication in the virtual environment. Native advertising, constituting an alternative to traditional, invasive forms of online advertising, involves the intentional adaptation of advertising messages to resemble the organic content of the platform on which they are displayed. Owing to this characteristic, it reduces perceptual barriers among audiences — such as banner blindness and ad blocking — and positions itself at the intersection of marketing communication and editorial content.

The principal research problem was formulated as the question of how the process of creating and communicating native advertising is shaped within an online marketing communication strategy. A review of the subject literature revealed five research gaps: the absence of a detailed description of the sequence of activities involved in the creation of native advertising, the lack of identification of the rituals organizing this process, insufficient recognition of the explicit and implicit rules followed by creators, the lack of a systematic characterization of the attributes of the native format in comparison with other promotional tools, and the absence of comparative analyses of its effectiveness. Existing studies have focused almost exclusively on the audience perspective, neglecting the organizational and process-oriented dimensions of native advertising creation.

In response to the identified gaps, ethogenics was adopted as the principal methodological approach. Ethogenics is a research perspective originating from social psychology and interpretative sociology, developed by Harré and Secord, aimed at reconstructing the rules, rituals, and meanings organizing the everyday activities of social actors within their natural context. Unlike grounded theory, ethogenics provides a predefined analytical framework, which enabled the study to focus on reconstructing the decision-making mechanisms of native advertising creators instead of leaving categorization entirely open-ended. This approach demonstrated advantages over ethnography, as it was specifically designed to reconstruct rules and meanings on the basis of intensive observational episodes without requiring prolonged immersion in the field.

The empirical research was conducted in Poland between 2025 and 2026 using sequential triangulation of four complementary qualitative methods: 40 in-depth interviews (10 with native advertising creators and 30 with recipients), 3 participant observations in advertising agencies (involving a total of 14 individuals), 225 projective tests (25 among creators and 200 among recipients), and focus group interviews validating the model in three advertising agencies with the participation of 12 respondents. The applied research procedure enabled the capture of declarative, behavioral, and projective dimensions of the actors' practices.

The findings allowed for the reconstruction of a six-stage cycle of shaping native advertising campaigns, comprising: preliminary analysis, creative preparation, technical configuration, data analysis, optimization, and scaling. The study revealed the rules, rituals, and competencies organizing the work of creators, as well as the coding and decoding patterns employed by recipients. The results led to the formulation of five overarching conclusions: (1) the process of creating native advertising functions as a ritual of uncertainty reduction, (2) effectiveness serves as the dominant rule of meaning legitimizing creators' decisions, (3) intuition constitutes a fully legitimate operational competence, (4) ethical norms function as a negotiable spectrum determined by the calculation of sanction risk, and (5) tacit knowledge represents a genuine source of competitive advantage among creators.

The practical outcome of the dissertation is an original model for managing native advertising within online marketing communication strategy, composed of three interrelated layers: the contextual layer (platform algorithms, competition, legal regulations, and seasonality), the actors layer (creators and recipients), and the communication layer. The model was empirically validated in three advertising agencies.

The dissertation contributes to management and quality sciences on four levels. On the methodological level, it constitutes the first application of ethogenics to the analysis of the native advertising creation process. On the conceptual level, it encourages the revision of the notions of process, effectiveness, ethics, and competence in marketing communication management. On the empirical level, it provides a detailed reconstruction of the decision-making mechanisms of creators and the reception patterns of native messages. On the practical level, it offers operational recommendations for native advertising creators, marketing communication managers, advertising platforms, and recipients of native advertising messages.