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A Loyalty Program in the Area of Digital Transformation Based on the Example of the Costa Coffee Brand

Programy lojalnościowe w erze transformacji cyfrowej na przykładzie marki Costa Coffee

Streszczenie. Powszechna transformacja cyfrowa, będąca pokłosiem wpływu trzech megatrendów – globalizacji, dynamicznego rozwoju technologii oraz nowego konsumenta na rynku, wymusiła na firmach dostosowanie się do nowych warunków rynkowych. Konsument, będący ostatnim ogniwem łańcucha, skupiający się tylko na konsumpcji jest obecnie współtwórcą oferty rynkowej. Jest bardziej wrażliwy na komunikaty marketingowe z wykorzystaniem nowoczesnych narzędzi takich jak między innymi urządzenia mobilne. Niniejsze opracowanie przedstawia proces adaptacji marki Costa Coffee do nowego środowiska rynkowego na przykładzie jej programu lojalnościowego.

Słowa kluczowe: programy lojalnościowe, globalizacja, transformacja cyfrowa, zarządzanie marką, nowoczesne koncepcje i narzędzia marketingowe, zarządzanie klientami.

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1. Introduction

Currently, we are witnessing changes in the economy as a result of, among other things, the development of information and communication technologies (ICT).[1] This transformation forces brands to adapt to the new digital market reality. In the era of these changes, a new type of consumer has emerged, who expects brands to adapt to the new realities of the market.[2] They are aware of modern solutions, share their opinions on social networking sites, look for uniqueness and authenticity and brands with personality.[3] They want to be active market participants and co-create it. They become a prosumer – a combination of a consumer and a producer.[4]

The aim of this article is to present the changes in the ways of communication with customers on the example of the new loyalty program Costa Coffee brand supported by mobile application.

2. The coffee market

According to the USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) research from the Coffee: World Markets and Trade report, global coffee production in 2018/2019 amounted to 174.5 million bags[5] (10,47 million tons), production increased by almost 16 million bags compared to the 2017/2018 season.[6] Global coffee production is based on the two most popular types of coffee: Arabica, which accounts for about 70% of world production, and Robusta, which accounts for about 30% of world production.[7] Arabica is a species requiring better climatic conditions than Robusta, which translates into both taste and price. Robusta is less tasty and cheaper.

1 G. Mazurek, *Transformacja cyfrowa. Perspektywa marketingu*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2019, p. 13.

2 B. Gregor, D. Kaczorowska-Spychalska, *Homo Cyber Oeconomicus – nowy wymiar zachowań konsumenckich*, [in:] B. Gregor, D. Kaczorowska-Spychalska (eds), *Marketing w erze technologii cyfrowych. Nowoczesne koncepcje i wyzwania*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2018, p. 59.

3 B. Gregor, M. Kalińska-Kula, *Market Intelligence jako program wsparcia procesów decyzyjnych we współczesnym przedsiębiorstwie*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2019, pp. 18–19.

4 A. Łaszkiewicz, *Współtworzenie wartości z konsumentami w środowisku wirtualnym*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego, Łódź 2018, p. 31.

5 1 bag of coffee = 60 kg.

6 United States Department of Agriculture, *Coffee: World Markets and Trade*, https://downloads.usda.library.cornell.edu/usda-esmis/files/m900nt40f/41687n67f/nk322j622/coffee.pdf (accessed: 10.06.2019).

7 I. Sobczak, *Czy wiesz, co pijesz? Zobacz, jaki gatunek kawy wybrać*, https://businessinsider.com.pl/lifestyle/jedzenie/arabica-i-robusta-rodzaje-i-gatunki-kawy/cvjydq6 (accessed: 10.06.2019).

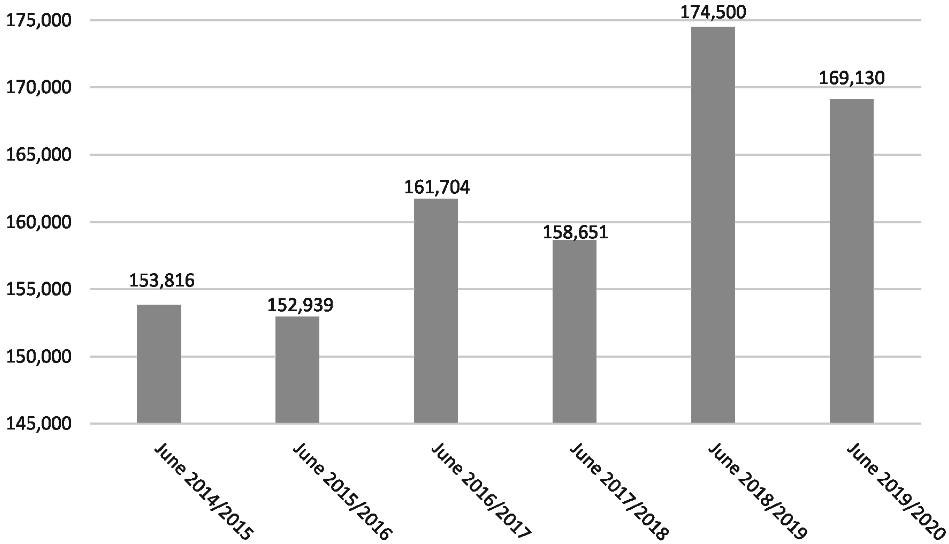

Chart 1. Global market of coffee production between 2017 and 2020 (in thousands of 60-kilogram bags)
Source: United States Department of Agriculture, *Coffee: World Markets and Trade*, https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/circulars/coffee.pdf (accessed: 10.06.2019).

Analyzing the graph one can notice a certain correlation. Between the seasons 2014/2015 and 2015/2016, 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 and 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 we can see a steeper and steeper decline in the value of the market. The reasons for this are, among others, very bad climatic conditions and a low price of coffee.

Table 5. Coffee summary of Arabica production between 2017 and 2020 (in thousands of 60-kilogram bags)

	June 2017/2018			June 2018/2019			June 2019/2020		
	Count	% of market share	Growth indicator (%)	Count	% of market share	Growth indicator (%)	Count	% of market share	Growth indicator (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Brazil	38,500	40,810	–15,570	48,200	46,172	25,195	41,000	42,146	–14,938
Colombia	13,825	14,655	–5,308	14,300	13,698	3,436	14,300	14,700	0,000
Ethiopia	7,055	7,478	1,613	7,250	6,945	2,764	7,350	7,556	1,379
Honduras	7,600	8,056	1,198	7,000	6,705	–7,895	6,500	6,682	–7,143
Peru	4,375	4,638	3,550	4,380	4,196	0,114	4,500	4,626	2,740
Mexico	3,800	4,028	22,581	3,850	3,688	1,316	4,350	4,472	12,987
Guatemala	3,600	3,816	5,882	3,500	3,353	–2,778	3,500	3,598	0,000

Table 5 (cont.)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
China	1,925	2,041	6,944	2,200	2,107	14,286	2,300	2,364	4,545
Nicaragua	2,700	2,862	3,846	2,500	2,395	–7,407	2,300	2,364	–8,000
India	1,583	1,678	0,000	1,470	1,408	–7,138	1,485	1,527	1,020
Vietnam	1,300	1,378	18,182	1,400	1,341	7,692	1,400	1,439	0,000
Costa Rica	1,525	1,617	17,308	1,300	1,245	–14,754	1,375	1,413	5,769
Indonesia	1,000	1,060	–23,077	1,200	1,150	20,000	1,250	1,285	4,167
Papua New Guinea	0,760	0,806	–28,638	0,825	0,790	8,553	0,850	0,874	3,030
Uganda	0,750	0,795	–37,500	0,800	0,766	6,667	0,750	0,771	–6,250
Other	4,041	4,283	–3,786	4,218	4,041	4,380	4,070	4,184	–3,509
TOTAL	94,339	100,000	–7,079	104,393	100,000	10,657	97,280	100,000	–6,814

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, *Coffee: World Markets and Trade*, https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/circulars/coffee.pdf (accessed: 10.06.2019).

The Arabic market is dominated by Brazil with a share of over 40%. Second place is taken by the Colombian market with a share ranging from 13.698% to 14.7%. These are fixed market positions in contrast to the third place, for which two countries are fighting: Ethiopia and Honduras. In June in the season 2017/2018 Honduras was in third place, while in the seasons 2018/2019 and 2019/2020 Ethiopia wins. The highest growth rates in 2017/2018 were recorded in countries such as Mexico, Vietnam and Costa Rica. In 2018/2019, Brazil, Indonesia and China recorded the highest growth rates. In the last season presented in the table above, Mexico recorded the highest growth rate. It is worth noting that the worst season for Arabic producers was 2019/2020. This may be related to global warming and droughts. With the current results we can see that the Arabic market in the season 2019/2020 is decreasing in comparison to the previous period by almost 7%.

Table 6. Coffee summary of Robusta production between 2017 and 2020 (in thousands of 60-kilogram bags)

	June 2017/2018			**June 2018/2019**			**June 2019/2020**		
	Count	% of market share	Growth indicator (%)	Count	% of market share	Growth indicator (%)	Count	% of market share	Growth indicator (%)
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Vietnam	28,000	43,538	9,375	29,000	41,365	3,571	29,100	40,501	0,345
Brazil	12,400	19,281	18,095	16,600	23,678	33,871	18,300	25,470	10,241

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Indonesia	9,400	14,616	1,075	9,400	13,408	0,000	9,450	13,152	0,532
India	3,683	5,727	1,825	3,700	5,278	0,462	4,000	5,567	8,108
Uganda	3,600	5,598	–10,000	4,000	5,706	11,111	3,500	4,871	–12,500
Malaysia	2,100	3,265	0,000	2,100	2,995	0,000	2,000	2,784	–4,762
Cote d'Ivoire	1,250	1,944	14,679	1,700	2,425	36,000	1,800	2,505	5,882
Thailand	0,700	1,088	–12,500	0,650	0,927	–7,143	0,700	0,974	7,692
Tanzania	0,550	0,855	10,000	0,600	0,856	9,091	0,600	0,835	0,000
Laos	0,450	0,700	9,756	0,460	0,656	2,222	0,475	0,661	3,261
Other	2,179	3,388	–3,627	1,897	2,706	–12,942	1,925	2,679	1,476
TOTAL	64,312	100,000	6,870	70,107	100,000	9,011	71,850	100,000	2,486

Source: United States Department of Agriculture, *Coffee: World Markets and Trade*, https://apps.fas.usda.gov/psdonline/circulars/coffee.pdf (accessed: 10.06.2019).

Robusta's market is dominated by three countries: Vietnam is the first country with a share from 40.501% to 43.538%, Brazil with a share from 19.281% to over 25% and Indonesia with a share from over 14% to 13.152%. This order is constant and the only thing that is changing is the share of Brazil, which is growing in favor of a decrease in the market shares of the other leading countries in the market. The highest growth rate is observed in Brazil, similarly to the changing share. In the 2017/2018 season the indicator was over 18%, in the 2018/2019 season it was over 33%, in the last season presented the rate of growth slowed down, but it is still the highest in the sector and amounts to over 10%. The growth rate of the market is still positive, which means the growth that only changes its character to a less dynamic one.

In Poland in 2017, the coffee market reached the value of over PLN 5.3 billion. This value has been growing at an average annual rate of around 13% over the last few years.[8] Distribution of coffee in Poland is carried out by companies such as:[9]

- Mondelez International Inc., which includes such brands as Jacobs, Maxwell House, Carte Noire and Tassimo;
- Nestle SA – owner of Nescafe, Nestle Ricore, Nescafe Dolce Gusto and Nespresso brands;
- Tchibo;

8 Analiza Rynku, *Rynek kawy w Polsce*, https://analizarynku.eu/rynek-kawy-w-polsce (accessed: 10.06.2019).

9 Portal Spożywczy, *Kto jest liderem rynku kawy w Polsce?*, http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/napoje/wiadomosci/kto-jest-liderem-rynku-kawy-w-polsce,112531.html (accessed: 10.06.2019).

- DE Master Blenders 1753 NV – owner of the brands like Douwe Egberts, Cafe Prima;
- Strauss Group Ltd – owner of Pedro's, MK Cafe, Sahara, Fort.

Table 7. The count of the biggest brands coffee shops chains in Poland

Brand of Coffee Shop	Count of Coffee shops in year		
	2016	2017	2018
Costa Coffee	134	144	151
So! Coffee	60	n.d.	58
Starbucks	53	64	69
Green Caffè Nero	45	58	60
Etno Cafe	7	14	20
Dunkin' Donuts	7	n.d.	3
The value of the coffee shops market	PLN 500 mln	PLN 550 mln	PLN 600 mln

Source: A. Wrona, *Rynek kawiarni w 2016 r. przychylny dla dużych sieci*, http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/horeca/wiadomosci/rynek-kawiarni-w-2016-r-przychylny-dla-duzych-sieci,138842.html (accessed: 10.06.2019); Horeca Trends, *Ponad dwa tysiące gości Etno Cafe Młociny*, https://www.horecatrends.pl/kawiarnie_oraz_puby_coctail_bary/115/ponad_dwa_tysiace_gosci_etno_cafe_mlociny,2144.html (accessed: 10.06.2019); A. Wrona, *Rynek kawiarni w 2017 r. – podsumowanie*, http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/horeca/wiadomosci/rynek-kawiarni-w-2017-r-podsumowanie,153465.html (accessed: 10.06.2019); M. Kaszuba-Janus, *Starbucks z kolejnym punktem*, http://www.horecanet.pl/starbucks-z-kolejnym-punktem/ (accessed: 10.06.2019); J. Solska, *Wojny kawiarniane*, https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/rynek/1742908,1,wojny-kawiarniane.read (accessed: 10.06.2019); M. Kaszuba--Janus, *Nowy lokal Costa Coffee*, http://www.horecanet.pl/nowy-lokal-costa-coffee/ (accessed: 10.06.2019); K. Woźniak, *Costa Coffee pracuje nad nową strategią*, https://mmponline.pl/artykuly/213837,costa-coffee-pracuje-nad-nowa-strategia (accessed: 10.06.2019); Portal Spożywczy, *Dyrektor Costa Coffee: Rynek kawiarni jest warty co najmniej 550 mln zł (wywiad)*, http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/horeca/wiadomosci/dyrektor-costa-coffee-rynek-kawiarni-jest-warty-co-najmniej-550-mln-zl-wywiad,144659.html (accessed: 10.06.2019); Trójmiasto, *Marzysz o własnej kawiarni? Otwórz So! Coffee*, https://biznes.trojmiasto.pl/Marzysz-o-wlasnej-kawiarni-Otworz-So-Coffee-n127583.html (accessed: 10.06.2019); P. Winnicki, *Dunkin' Donuts opuszcza nasz rynek. Po raz drugi nie podbiło podniebień Polaków*, http://wyborcza.pl/7,155287,23781464,dunkin-donuts-opuszczaja-nasz-rynek-po-raz-drugi-nie-podbili.html (accessed: 10.06.2019).

The data describe the Polish market of café chains. The Costa Coffee brand has the largest number of open outlets. At the turn of 2016, 2017 and 2018 it opened 17 new cafes, which in total amounts to 151 open places. It is worth noting such brands as Starbucks, So! Coffee and Green Café Nero. In 2016, the chain of So! Coffee cafés was the second largest in terms of the number of openings, and in 2018 it fell to the fourth place. Green Café Nero changed its market position from the 4th place in 2016 to the 3rd place in 2018. The Starbucks chain, from the 3rd place in 2016 to the 2nd place in 2018. With the current number of outlets, the market contender cannot compete with the Costa Coffee chain, but may increase its competitive position in relation to other brands in order not to threaten its current position on the market. The value of the café market in Poland is growing on average by PLN 50 million year on year and the number of cafés on the market is rapidly growing.[10]

3. Costa Coffee

It is a brand founded in 1971 by brothers Sergio and Bruno Costa. The first café under the Costa brand was opened seven years later in London. Today the company has more than 2,103 branches in 25 countries. The company currently employs more than 40,000 people and serves more than 11 million people per month in the UK.[11]

The Costa Coffee chain entered the Polish market in 2010 as a result of the merger of two companies: CHI Polska SA and Costa Ltd (part of the hotel and catering group Whitbread PLC). The Coffeeheaven chain, present on the market, changed its name to Costa Coffee. The café is decorated in a modern style with accents of brick and wood. Communication promoting the new brand was carried out by means of ATL and BTL activities such as outdoor, Internet and radio.[12]

In order to engage their customers and encourage them to visit their stores more often, they have introduced a loyalty program. Initially, it consisted of collecting stamps on a cardboard box. After collecting the right amount of coffee, the customer received free coffee. The program did not stand out too much from the competition. Other brands used exactly the same form of customer loyalty building.

The technology started to develop and the competition slowly changed the conditions and forms of loyalty programs. Costa, in order not to lose its market position, introduced magnetic cards and a completely new loyalty plan – Coffee

10 V. Filimonau, M. Krivcova, F. Pettit, *An Exploratory Study of Managerial Approaches to Food Waste Mitigation in Coffee Shops*, "International Journal of Hospitality Management" 2019, vol. 76, p. 49.

11 Gastrona, *COSTA COFFEE w nowej odsłonie*, http://serwis-restauratorski.gastrona.pl/art/COSTA_COFFEE_w_nowej_odslonie,10399.html (accessed: 10.06.2019).

12 P. Mroziak, *Costa Coffee zastąpi marki Coffeeheaven i Costa by Coffeeheaven*, http://www.portalspozywczy.pl/horeca/wiadomosci/costa-coffee-zastapi-marki-coffeeheaven-i-costa-by-coffeeheaven,97817.html (accessed: 10.06.2019).

Club. It consisted in collecting points for money spent and exchanging them for free coffee. For every zloty spent, the customer received 5 points. For example, to get a cappuccino you need to collect 990 points.[13] This plan did not appeal to customers, especially in the times of market transformation and digitalization. As a result of these changes, its needs, behavior and communication have changed. Mobile technologies and smartphones have become an integral part of life.[14] For such a demanding new type of consumer, the current solutions proved to be unattractive.

3.1. New consumer on the market

New creation in the market space is characterized by constant verification of opinions and information from the real world in the virtual space. They like to integrate and create communities. They have high technological competence.[15] They actively participate in creating the market value of enterprises/brands, which they actively use.[16] They talk to brands through social media channels, especially on mobile devices.[17] Most of their social life is already experienced in the virtual world.[18] These transformations have a significant impact on the current purchasing processes that change the current consumer behavior paradigm. The ROPO effect (research online, purchase offline) is a symptom of such changes. Before making a purchase in a stationary shop or using a service, the consumer searches for information about it on the Internet. Additionally, the reverse ROPO effect (research offline, purchase online) can also be observed – searching for information in a stationary shop, while the purchase is made via the Internet.[19]

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13 M. Socha, *Która sieć kawiarniana jest najlepsza?*, https://kawowy.guru/jaka-siec-kawiarniana-jest-najlepsza/ (accessed: 10.06.2019).

14 P. Kotler, H. Kartajaya, I. Setiawan, *Marketing 4.0. Era cyfrowa*, MT Biznes, Warszawa 2017, p. 28.

15 K. Stopczyńska, *Wykorzystanie influencer marketingu w kreowaniu relacji z klientami pokolenia Y*, „Studia Oeconomica Posnaniensia" 2018, vol. 6, no. 5, p. 107.

16 E. Gwiaździński, *Nowoczesne narzędzia marketingu mobilnego w perspektywie ludzi młodych*, [in:] M. Sipa, I. Gorzeń-Mitka, A. Włodarczyk, A. Skibiński, M. Sitek (eds), *Wielowymiarowość zarządzania organizacją XXI wieku*, Wydawnictwo Politechniki Częstochowskiej, Częstochowa 2019, pp. 170–171.

17 A. Krzepicka, *Współczesny konsument – konsument digitalny*, "Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach" 2016, no. 255, pp. 207–208.

18 A. Linkiewicz, M. Bartosik-Purgat, *Konsument oraz proces decyzyjny w warunkach globalizacji*, [in:] M. Bartosik-Purgat (ed.), *Zachowania konsumentów. Globalizacja, nowe technologie, aktualne trendy, otoczenie społeczno-kulturowe*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2017, p. 19.

19 R. Wolny, *Zmiany w zachowaniach nabywczych polskich e-konsumentów*, "Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Katowicach" 2016, no. 270, p. 287.

3.2. Loyalty program

In response to the new market conditions, Costa brand owners decided to improve the existing loyalty plan and adapt it to the requirements of new consumers. In October 2018, they launched a new loyalty program in Poland via a mobile application available on smartphones.[20] The application uses mobile technologies such as QR codes and geolocation. QR codes are used as a graphic form of individual identification of a café customer and as an individual coupon. Geolocation, on the other hand, provides information about the nearest cafes in the area.[21] In the new plan the customer collects beans for the purchase of coffee, in order to receive free coffee beans, it has to collect fourteen beans. In addition to collecting beans, the customer gets additional discounts in the form of coupons, e.g. for seasonal coffee or extra cake.[22] The purchase process is as follows.

Figure 1. The purchasing process in Costa Coffee
Source: Own elaboration.

In the first stage of the process, the customer chooses the product or products they wish to purchase. In the second stage, the customer is identified. The buyer brings the individual customer ID in the form of a QR code closer to the reader. In the next stage, the customer chooses whether to take advantage of a bonus (free coffee) or a discount. Then, they make the payment and in the last step they collect the order. After the payment is made, the beans are charged immediately. The current quantity can be seen when the application is launched.

The application of the Costa Coffee loyalty plan consists of four tabs. The navigation menu for them is located at the bottom of the screen. The first tab shows the current number of grains, individual customer ID in the form of a QR code as well as available prizes and discounts. The second tab shows a map of available cafes in the vicinity. The third tab shows an individual customer code, which is sent to

20 Wiadomości Handlowe, *Costa Coffee digitalizuje swój program lojalnościowy*, https://www.wiadomoscihandlowe.pl/artykuly/costa-coffee-digitalizuje-swoj-program-lojalnoscio,49345 (accessed: 10.06.2019).

21 J. Hamdan, *Aplikacja pełna ziarenek kawy*, https://handelextra.pl/artykuly/216421,aplikacja--pelna-ziarenek-kawy (accessed: 10.06.2019).

22 M. Soroczyńska, *Kawiarnie Costa Coffee wprowadzają aplikację Costa App*, https://mmponline.pl/artykuly/216469,kawiarnie-costa-coffee-wprowadzaja-aplikacje-costa-app (accessed: 10.06.2019).

a friend to invite him/her to register in a loyalty plan. When registering, one needs to enter the customer code in the appropriate field. After registration, the referrer will receive an additional two seeds. The last tab contains settings, information about current promotions, regulations, contact details and a button for logging out.

Figure 2. Illustration of Costa Coffee mobile application
Source: Apple, *Costa Coffee Club PL*, https://apps.apple.com/pl/app/costa-coffee-club-pl/id1435140959 (accessed: 10.06.2019).

The new, digitalized loyalty program adjusted to the new consumer was positively evaluated by the recipients and additionally won two awards during the 10th Poland & CEE Customer Loyalty Summit. The first Loyalty Awards statuette was awarded in the best loyalty program/activities in services (B2C) category, and the second in the best new loyalty program/activities of the year 2018 category.[23]

4. Conclusion

In summary, the Costa Coffee brand has introduced a renewed, digitalized loyalty program in an attempt to encourage its existing customers to come to the café more often and attract new customers. The new loyalty plan was positively evaluated by café customers, which may translate into increased brand revenue, increased

23 Ł. Szymański, *Program lojalnościowy Costa "Coffee Club" nagrodzony w Loyalty Awards*, https://biznes.newseria.pl/biuro-prasowe/it_i_technologie/program-lojalnosciowy,b639293097 (accessed: 10.06.2019).

awareness of the Costa Coffee brand, improved brand image and a declaration of brand positioning to listen more to customers. Such efforts are significant determinants of building competitive advantage in relation to other players on the market and allow the brand to maintain its leading position, despite significant pressure from the global competitor, Starbucks. While paying particular attention to the temporary nature of competitive advantages, brand owners should analyze the current performance and start developing their loyalty plan in order to further increase customer engagement and prevent the main competitor from jeopardizing the current market position in any way in the future.

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