



*16th International Scientific Conference*  
**Current Trends and Challenges for Forest-Based Sector:  
Carbon Neutrality and Bioeconomy**

# **MODERN MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN THE FOREST SECTOR AS A FACTOR TO INCREASE THE ADDED VALUE IN TERMS OF COVID**

by

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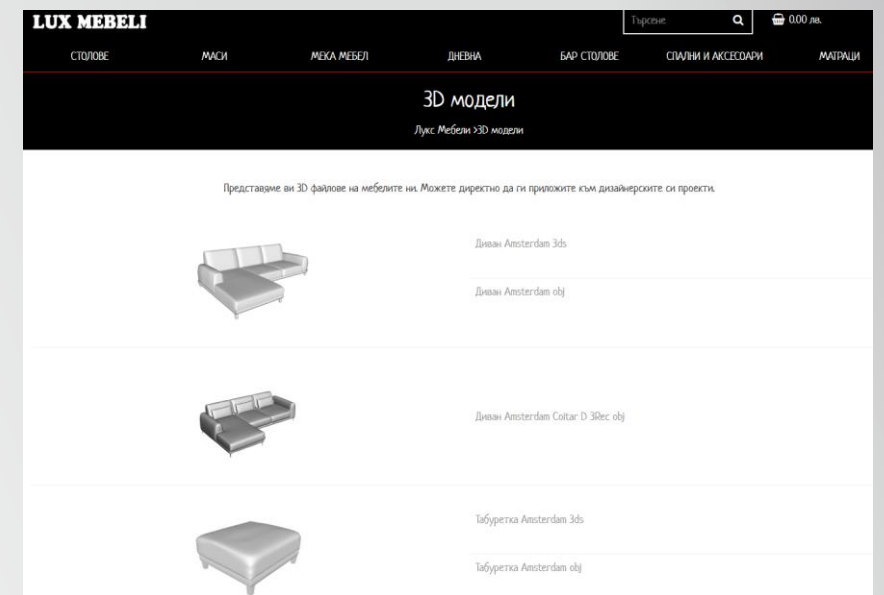


# AGENDA

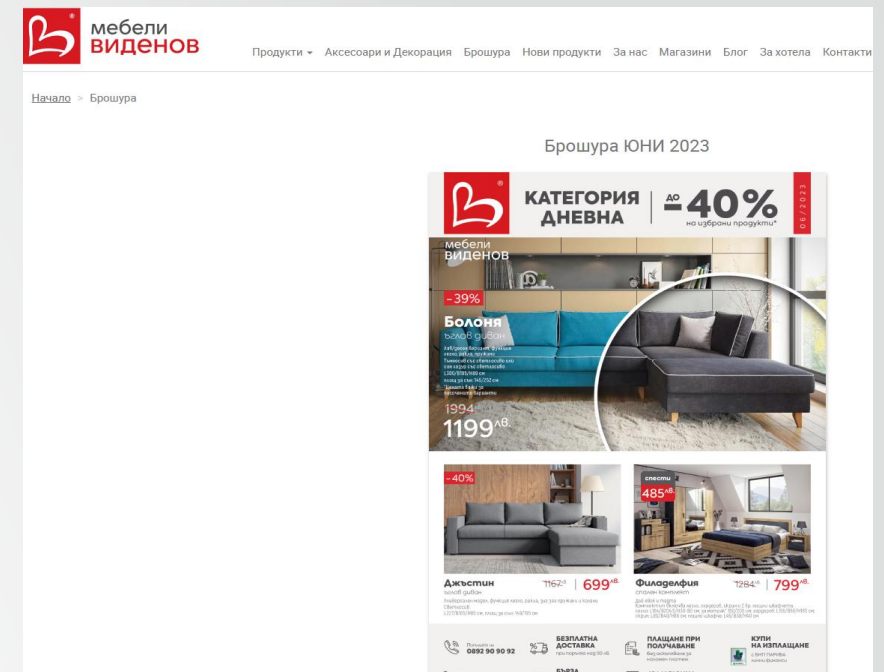
- *Introduction*
- *Survey methodology*
- *Survey results*
  - *for furniture enterprises*
  - *for customers*
- *Discussion*
- *Conclusions*



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## *Introduction*

- Increase furniture production by over 25% in 2021;
- Increase furniture exports - by over 30% in 2021;
- Increase furniture imports - by over 38% in 2021;
- Over 4000 enterprises in the furniture industry which calculates 3% of the GDP of the country;
- Leading furniture companies operating in the Bulgarian market report an increase in online sales by 20% in 2022, compared to 2016;
- Over 85% of the furniture is destined for export, the demand for upholstered and kitchen furniture increases, meanwhile purchasing of office furniture and commercial furniture decreases.



# Introduction

## ENTERPRISES HAVING A WEBSITE

Size of the company / Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	%	%	%	%	%
Micro enterprises	46,6	45,9	45,9	47,6	47,0
SMEs	68,3	74,1	71,3	70,6	73,0
Large enterprises	84,7	88,2	84,5	86,3	87,7

Source: NSI, 2023

## ENTERPRISES USING SOCIAL MEDIA

Size of the company / Year	2016	2017	2019	2021
	%	%	%	%
Micro enterprises	29,8	33,1	31,8	36,3
SMEs	39,4	39,1	41,8	49,0
Large enterprises	48,2	49,4	52,4	63,3

Source: NSI, 2023



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# Introduction

## ENTERPRISES WITH E-COMMERCE SALES BY SIZE

Size of the company / Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Micro enterprises</b>	9,5	7,2	10,0	9,6	10,7	14,1
<b>SMEs</b>	14,6	11,5	14,9	16,2	15,8	17,9
<b>Large enterprises</b>	18,5	15,4	18,0	22,7	23,3	24,8

Source: NSI, 2023



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## Survey methodology

	Survey of 85 furniture enterprises	Survey of 80 furniture consumers
Period	March-April 2022	September-October 2022
Number of questions	33 closed and open questions	7 open and closed questions
Place	on the spot (in the whole territory of Bulgaria)	on the spot in front of Videnov, IKEA, and Aikov shops in Sofia
Response rate	23%	15%
Profile of the respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• medium and large enterprises;</li><li>• representatives of the management staff of the enterprises.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in the 25-50 age group;</li><li>• around 80% are at the age gap between 25-35 years old;</li><li>• families where both partners (male and female) were visiting the shop.</li></ul>



# Survey results (furniture enterprises)

- 41.2% have developed and implemented new changes in sales and distribution methods in the last 12 months;
- 30.6% use social media (mainly Facebook)
- 36.5% use electronic media as a tool for sharing marketing news and offers for upcoming discounts;
- enterprises are mainly presenting their products during fairs and exhibitions (40%) and hence distributing company paper catalogues (56.5%);
- 89% have an internet page, and for 80% of them, their page is the main channel for advertising;
- only 56.5% claim that the information on their website is up-to-date;
- 40% state that their website is static and provides general information about the company;
- Of the respondents who have a website, 41.2% indicate that their customers can make online orders, and 25.9% - that customers can also pay for the goods online;
- 20% offer the customers to generate 3D interactive images and 5.9% have an augmented reality option;
- 31.8% of the respondents have electronic catalogues;
- 11.8% have developed mobile applications.



# Survey results (customers)

- 70% trust humorous furniture ads with little text in them and more visuals;
- nearly 80% prefer to buy furniture from stores that have functional and detailed websites, electronic catalogues, and online payment options;
- when choosing to buy furniture, 70% would trust recommendations from acquaintances and friends, while 30% rely on social networks, reviews, and comments of other users;
- they would pick up a paper catalogue from the store, the priority is online catalogues and advertisements, which are the real reason customers come and physically look at the products at the store;
- before making the relevant purchase, they prefer to have the option to see how the selected furniture will relate to the rest of the decor through the use of 3D interactive images.





# Discussion

Chi-square test, by the use of IBM - SPSS Statistics

No statistically significant relationships	Statistically significant relationships
The use of 3D interactive images and the image of the enterprise (Cramer's V: 0.094, $p > 0.05$ )	
The popularity of the brand and the possibility of generating 3D interactive images from the company's website (Cramer's V: 0.150, $p > 0.05$ )	A weak statistical relationship between the popularity of the brand and the presence of electronic catalogues with full product specifications on the company's website (Cramer's V: 0.215, $p < 0.05$ )
The use of social media and the popularity of the analyzed furniture companies (Cramer's V: 0.093, $p < 0.05$ )	An average statistical relationship was calculated between the use of print media for advertising purposes and brand popularity (Cramer's V: 0.375, $p > 0.05$ )

Source: own calculations, N=85



# Conclusions

- The surveyed companies do not consider their marketing strategy among the main factors of competitive advantage. Priority is given to product quality, value for money, and design.
- The analyzed furniture companies mainly rely on traditional methods of advertising such as visiting fairs and exhibitions, paper catalogues, advertisements in print media, etc.
- Bulgarian furniture companies have not yet taken advantage of all the functionalities of the digital environment to create competitive advantages. However, the current marketing strategies adopted by them do not meet customer expectations.
- Furniture companies still do not consider modern digital marketing instruments as a way of attracting customers, improving the company's reputation and brand popularity.
- As a result of the current geopolitical situation in the world, the countries of Western Europe are starting a massive search for suppliers of raw materials, not from China, but from Eastern Europe. Bulgaria must take advantage of this and actively participate in the Global Chains for the creation of added value by attracting new partners and investors looking for alternatives to move their production from Asia to Europe.



# Thank you for your attention!

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