



Faculty of Economics, University of Niš, 16 October 2015

International Scientific Conference

**CHALLENGES IN BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS:
GROWTH, COMPETITIVENESS AND INNOVATIONS**

ANNUAL MARKETING PLAN PROPOSAL FOR LAUNCHING A NEW BRAND ON THE BULGARIAN MARKET

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***Abstract:** The objective of this paper is to present an annual marketing plan proposal for launching a new brand on the Bulgarian market at the example of a new ouzo brand. The research paper presents some of the leading Bulgarian brands in the market of fast moving consumer goods. More specifically, the paper will be dealing with the alcoholic beverages – the anise category. The annual marketing plan proposal can serve as an example for similar future studies, as it is applicable, but not limited to the FMCG market.*

***Keywords:** brand; marketing plan; FMCG; budget allocation*

1. Introduction

The producers of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) are well aware that a firm's leading role on the market is ensured through strong brands that in turn guarantee loyal customers. Nowadays the purchase decision, made by the consumers, is easier since they know which benefits they will gain by buying the product that is sold under a certain brand. A strong and established brand provides the customer with both functional and emotional benefits.

Launching a new brand is risky. Therefore a lot of data about the market, the new brand concept, the product, etc. usually have to be studied in detail. However, it is not easy to relate such data to how the new brand will actually perform on the market.

A successful new brand normally settles down in about a year of its launch. By this time the new brand sales level and also other measures, such as – penetration and average buying frequency, will have become steady. The paper concentrates its results primarily on secondary data. For the collection and the analysis of the secondary data, the availability of marketing literature, as well as scientific papers and previous studies on alike topics, have been used.

The main emphasis in this paper are as follows:

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UDC 658.626(497.2)

- Price positioning proposal;
- Planning of annual sales volume by months and by distribution channels;
- Marketing plan proposal and a calendar for marketing activities;
- Proposal for budget allocation for marketing activities for the new ouzo brand.

2. Price Positioning Proposal

Price proposal is based on the information data from IWSR for ouzo market (2008-2013). From the provided data it is easy to conclude that the new ouzo brand should be targeted at the low price segment (value segment in the table), because in this segment there is not a well established market leader, which is obvious by both sales data in liters and market share for different brands in volume.

Table 1. Data from IWSR for ouzo market (2008-2013)

Consumption – Qty in .000 Litres	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Standard	424.800	391.500	445.050	467.100	465.750	474.300
<i>Plomari Ouzo</i>	302.400	316.800	347.400	360.000	370.350	390.150
<i>Tsantali Ouzo</i>	90.000	46.800	68.850	78.300	65.250	54.000
<i>Ouzo 12</i>	22.500	20.250	20.250	22.500	24.750	27.000
<i>Other brands</i>	9.900	7.650	8.550	6.300	5.400	3.150
Value	4.500	2.250	227.250	455.400	542.250	605.700
<i>Other brands</i>		1.800	227.250	450.000	362.700	392.400
<i>Paralia Ouzo</i>					168.750	204.750
<i>Lesvos</i>				5.400	7.650	5.400
<i>Pilavas Ouzo</i>						3.150
<i>Kavala Ouzo</i>					3.150	0.000
<i>Mini</i>	4.500	0.450	0.000			
Total:	429.300	393.750	672.300	922.500	1008.000	1080.000

Source: IWSR

Research shows that the traditional bottle of 0.700 l sells for around 8 lv, while the other famous brands sell at prices from 12 to 15 lv. This price proposal expands the group of potential consumers, who are no longer just people with high social status, but also consumers with medium and low incomes. Based on the above mentioned information the price proposal is as follows:

- ✓ 1 l = 11.50 lv
- ✓ 0.70 l = 7.95 lv
- ✓ 0.20 l = 2.59 lv

Market shares for different brands in volume for total ouzo and for the different segments – standard and value – are listed below. The results show that:

Market share in volume (low price segment/value segment)

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Paralia Ouzo → 34 %; 19 % (total ouzo) - main competitor

Lesvos → 1%; 0.5% (total ouzo)

Pilavas Ouzo → 0.5 %

The listed above market shares may not seem very encouraging. But they reflect the patterns for the established brands in that particular market segment – here value segment of ouzo in Bulgaria. The data therefore should serve to provide realistic norms for judging the new brand's prospects and also for evaluating its (future) progress.

By looking at the existing brands in the Bulgarian ouzo market (low price segment/value segment) we see that these various possibilities narrow down to just about one. The calculations above show that the penetrations of the three leading brands vary from 34% down to 0.5%. However, the average number of purchases per customer varies relatively little. This statement is the common pattern for FMCG – the penetrations vary markedly, but the purchase frequencies vary less. This situation occurs despite the differences in product formulation, price, advertising etc.

Paralia Ouzo is a leader in the low price segment, but the results also show that there is not a good alternative in this price segment yet and thus launching a new ouzo brand in this particular segment is a good decision for both the company and the customers. Moreover, as we see from the data shown on the table (see Table 1), the value segment generates more volume sales (in liters) than the standard segment. And this is logical as lower prices stimulate clients to consume, respectively buy more ouzo.

Paralia Ouzo has been chosen for a main competitor, because of the above mentioned reasons, and consequently the author has based the price positioning proposal considering both prices that are typical for the value segment and Paralia Ouzo's prices. The author has chosen a slightly lower price compared to Paralia Ouzo in order to attract clients easily and also based on market research information (including but not limited to Nielsen research data) which show that there is a tendency for ouzo prices to decrease annually by an average of 2 leva per liter.

Market share in volume (standard segment)

Plomari Ouzo → 82%; 36% (total ouzo)

Tsantali Ouzo → 11%; 5% (total ouzo)

Ouzo 12 → 6%; 2.5% (total ouzo)

The more developed segment is the standard one. The calculated market share in volume indicates that in the standard segment Plomari Ouzo is indisputable leader (the same is also visible from the data shown in the table). There are also other alternatives consumers can turn to (although they do have significantly lower market share in volume). Thus it can be concluded that it will be impossible or at least very hard for a new ouzo brand to compete in the standard segment, because the barriers to enter this segment are extremely high.

3. Planning of Annual Sales Volume by Months and by Distribution Channels

As the ouzo brand is new on the market, its ultimate sales performance will logically be difficult to predict. However, for packaged grocery products or FMCG, it is known that the established brands all attract much the same patterns of buyer behaviour (Ehrenberg 1972; 1988). Consequently any sales target for the new brand can be translated into predictions about the new brand's sales for when the new brand settles down and becomes an established brand.

When planning the annual sales volume by months and also by channels the author was again guided by the main competitor that has been chosen – Paralia Ouzo. In 2012 Paralia Ouzo has sold 168.750 liters and we notice (see Table 1) that only a year later the brand has increased its sales to 204.750 liters. Considering this we can plan the total annual sales volume by months for the new ouzo brand to be 190.000 liters – it is slightly more than Paralia Ouzo sales in liters for their first year on the market, but considering the market growth and the fact that there is not an alternative competitor with considerable market share in volume, 190.000 liters for the first year for the new ouzo brand are a good and realistic number.

Table 2. Planning of annual sales volume by months

Month	Jan (1)	Feb (2)	Mar (3)	Apr (4)	May (5)	Jun (6)	Jul (7)	Aug (8)	Sep (9)	Oct (10)	Nov (11)	Dec (12)
<i>Liters .000</i>	5.35	5.35	5.35	10	27.25	31.5	31.5	31.5	21.5	10	5.35	5.35
Total:	190 liters											

Source: Author's own calculations

As for the sales plan by months (see Table 2) – ouzo is primarily consumed in summer and the end of spring, because of its seasonality (confirmed by different research data). The graphs clearly show that the strongest months for the anise category are the months from June to September. The trend also shows that in summer the consumption of ouzo increases both in value and volume.

Table 3. Planning of annual sales volume by distribution channels

Distribution channels	Bulgaria food stores	HoReCa	Convenience/Alcohol stores	Kiosks	Petrol Stations
<i>%</i>	57%	30%	9.5%	3%	0.5%
<i>Litres</i>	108.3	57	18.05	5.7	0.95

Source: Author's own calculations

The most successful distribution channels are Bulgarian food stores, convenience alc. stores and HoReCa (especially for the summer season).

A more detailed forecast is shown below.

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Table 4. Planning of annual sales volume by months and by distribution channels

<i>Month</i>	Jan (1)	Feb (2)	Mar (3)	Apr (4)	May (5)	Jun (6)	Jul (7)	Aug (8)	Sep (9)	Oct (10)	Nov (11)	Dec (12)
Total Litres '000	5.35	5.35	5.35	10	27.25	31.5	31.5	31.5	21.5	10	5.35	5.35
Bulgaria food stores	3.05	3.05	3.05	5.7	15.53	17.96	18.76	17.96	12.26	5.7	3.05	3.05
HoReCa	1.61	1.61	1.61	3	8.17	9.45	9.45	9.45	6.45	3	1.61	1.61
Convenience/ Alcohol stores	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.95	2.59	2.99	2.99	2.99	2.04	0.95	0.51	0.51
Kiosks	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.3	0.82	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.64	0.3	0.16	0.16
Petrol Stations	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.13	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.11	0.05	0.03	0.03
Total sales for the year:	190 liters											

Source: Author's own calculations

4. Marketing Plan Proposal and a Calendar for Marketing Activities

Marketing involves identifying and satisfying customer needs. The marketing plan puts in place a series of marketing activities to ensure the desired objectives are achieved. Marketing plans can cover any time period, but in this paper the marketing plan proposal is set out to cover activities for the next year (at brand level).

The structure of the marketing plan proposal, discussed in this paper, and the amount of detail, will depend on the size of the brand, the timescale involved and how both the market and the economy are behaving. However, the marketing plan proposal for the launch of the new ouzo brand on the Bulgarian market follows closely the outline described below.

Macro Analysis

Legal Environment

- The definition, description, presentation, labeling and protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks are regulated by Regulation (European Community) 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 January 2008.
- Annex II of the Regulation (EC) 110/2008 sets 46 categories of spirits. There are several categories of spirits, which in one form or another contain anise. Anise-flavored spirit drinks are spirit drinks produced by flavoring ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin with natural extracts of star-shaped anise, anise, fennel or any other plant which contains the same principal aromatic ingredient.
- Annex III, which lists the geographical indications, refers to ouzo as distilled anise.
- Law on Corporate Income Tax (last modified 3 January 2014)
- The Wine and Spirits Law (last modified 1.01.2014)

- Excise Duties and Tax Warehouses Law (last modified 3.01.2014)
- Commercial Law (last modified 25.03.2014)

Environmental Factors

As ouzo is traditionally produced in Greece, Bulgarian environmental factors do not have effect over ouzo production. Ouzo is a typically Greek product and wins its consumers because of the positive associations Bulgarians have towards Greece and the Greek summer. The fact is that ouzo is becoming more popular in Bulgaria, especially among the young and open-minded people. This is partly due to the more affordable price of the new brands of ouzo offered on the Bulgarian market.

Social Factors

Trends in terms of population in Bulgaria are unfavorable. Population decreases. Apart from the negative natural growth, it should be also noted that there are many immigrants. All this is connected to the business organizations in two ways – it concerns both labor resources and consumers. On the other hand there is a reduction in consumption (because there are fewer potential clients).

However, a number of research show that in recent years Bulgarians have developed a high culture in terms of ouzo consumption (there are approximately 20 ouzo brands that are currently sold in Bulgaria), consequently the firms are slowly increasing the quantity sold on the Bulgarian market. Partly because of the slow income growth of the Bulgarian population, ouzo occupies a relatively small part of the consumer basket.

Economic Factors

Inflation

With the help of the IMF, the country maintains a moderate level of inflation, which is beneficial to the companies. (A slight increase in prices increases revenues, and thus the profit of the organization).

Unemployment

There is a continuous rise of the unemployment due to the overall economic decline in Bulgaria in recent years. In general, high unemployment occurs in periods of recession, and shows inefficient use of resources.

Interest rate

The interest rate affects consumption, savings and investments. The interest rate is directly related to inflation. If the interest rate is big – savings rise, but at the expense of investments, which decrease.

Technological Factors

Ouzo consumption can gradually become traditional for the summer season. The organization of forums is important. In these events both competitors and consumers can compare different brands offered on the market.

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Bulgarian market trends for ouzo

Of all anise drinks only mastic and ouzo are popular in Bulgaria, but they have different target groups. Mastic has a higher alcohol percentage and is generally consumed from older people. Ouzo is a modern beverage and it is aimed at young people who are its usual users. On average in recent years on anise drinks market in Bulgaria, there is an increase ouzo consumption. This is related to the positive ideas that Bulgarians have toward Greece and this makes the Greek ouzo drink more attractive. Furthermore nowadays Bulgarians are more likely to try new products.

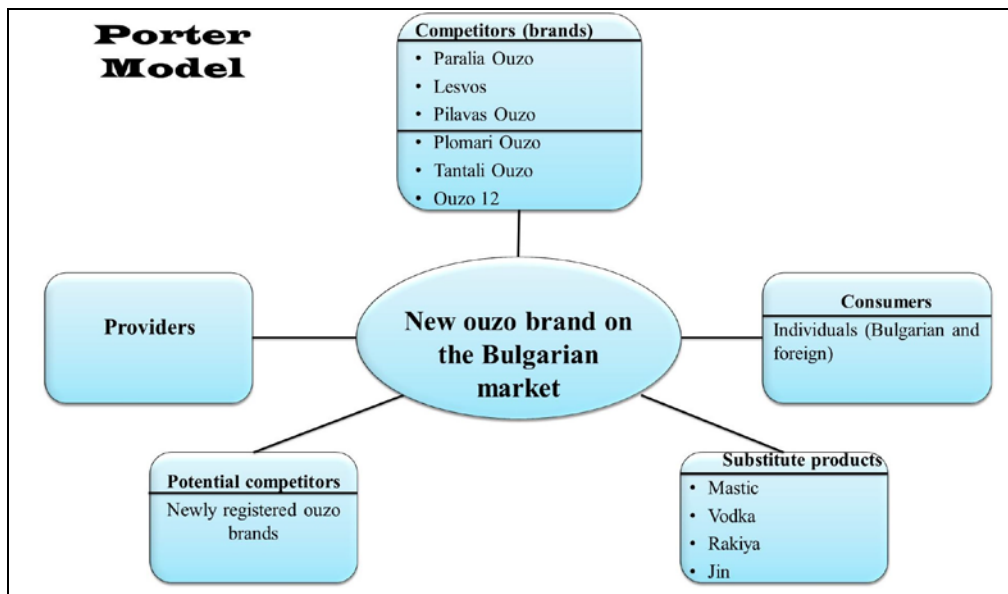
Micro Analysis

The first step in Micro Analysis is to conduct an evaluation of the Bulgarian ouzo market – its brands and products. This should include an assessment of the brand’s position and the state of the market. When launching the new ouzo brand the company needs to know what its customers want and what competitor brands already exist. As well as targeting the male consumers, women are also an important target market for the new ouzo brand. This is partly because women often buy products/brands for the household as well as help household’s members choose which products/brands to buy.

The new ouzo brand may use the described below analysis to help assess the market.

Porter Analysis

Figure 1. Porter Analysis for the new ouzo brand on the Bulgarian market



Source: Author's

Table 5. Structural analysis of the anise category – Porter

			1	2	3	4	5	
Barriers to entry	Savings form production of big quantities	Small				*		Big
	Product differentiation	Weak			*			Strong
	Brand prominence	Low		*				High
	Transfer costs	Low			*			High
	Access to distribution channels	Free	*					Limited
	Capital requirements	Low		*				High
	Access to the latest technologies	Free		*				Limited
	Access to materials	Free				*		Limited
	Government protection	Nonexistent				*		Strong
	The experience effect	Unsubstantial				*		Very important
Barriers to exit	Special assets	High	*					Low
	Costs to exit the industry	High		*				Low
	Internal strategic relationships	High				*		Low
	Emotional barriers	High		*				Low
	Government and social restrictions	High			*			Low
Rivals in the industry	Number of the competitors	High		*				Low
	Category growth	Slow				*		Fast
	Fixed costs	High			*			Low

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	Characteristics of production	Consumer	*				Special
	Increase in distribution capacity	Slight	*				Considerable
	Variety of the competitors	Great			*		Small
	Strategic goals	Big			*		Small
Customers	Number of significant customers	Small			*		Considerable
	Substitutes availability	Many		*			Few
	Costs for customers to transfer	Low	*				High
	Share of the anise category in customers' spending	High			*		Low
	Profitability from the customers	Low			*		High
Suppliers	Number of the significant suppliers	Low	*				High
	Availability of substitutes for the supplied products	Few			*		Many
	Transfer costs (for using other suppliers)	High		*			Low
	Suppliers' contribution for quality in the industry	High			*		Low

Source: Author's

Consumers – General Characteristics

When determining the market of a certain brand it is essential to define whether the product is for personal consumption or it can be classified as a commodity. Ouzo is a

product for personal consumption. Consequently the emphasis is on end customers, although usually the manufacturer does not sell directly to them. The firm normally uses a large network of wholesalers and retailers.

Today, unlike in the past, the company that sells the brand and the end consumer have the ability to communicate through various means. Communications, direct and indirect feedback between the firm and the end consumer are possible by the use of specific methods for finding information – studies, surveys, interviews.

Thus the firm receives a valuable information related to:

- Consumer expectations;
- Whether or not customers' expectations are satisfied;
- Recommendations.

Considering customers as determinants in the market we have to group them.

Age – people that consume ouzo cover a wide range of age groups – young, middle-aged people. It should also be noted that the tendency to consume alcohol (ouzo) is reinforced by the highly stressful everyday life.

Gender – recent research on the topic show that consumers' separation in terms of their gender is not appropriate, because ouzo is consumed by both men and women (there is a tendency that women prefer ouzo to mastic).

Table 6. Market segmentation

<i>Source</i>	<i>Segment 1</i>	<i>Segment 2</i>	<i>Segment 3</i>	<i>Segment 4</i>
<i>Demographic characteristics</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Age</i> • <i>Income</i> • <i>Nationality</i> 	0-18 Usually do not have an income of their own Bulgarians	18-45 400-650 lv Bulgarians	45-65 Over 650 lv Bulgarians & foreigners	Over 65 Below 450 lv Bulgarians
<i>Lifestyle</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Employment</i> • <i>Interests</i> 	almost none household & entertainment	great personal & professional	average to small entertainment	almost none household
<i>Consumption behavior</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Frequency (weekly use)</i> • <i>Reasons to buy</i> 	do not consume	Very often Brand loyalty	frequently customers see the brand- - like it- - chose	limited by occasions

Source: Author's

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As seen from the table, four segments can be created. The essential for the company is Segment 2. The main reasons for this are:

- Customers' income (400-650 leva) is sufficient to meet consumers' needs and there is some amount left, so clients can afford to purchase ouzo.
- Most of the customers are employed and, as it is shown on the table, they have professional and personal interests.
- Ouzo consumption is driven by the motive: brand loyalty.

Therefore we can define Segment 2 as the target market for the new ouzo brand.

Ouzo consumption has won wide popularity among consumers with middle and low incomes, who previously drank only mastic. The goal is to offer high quality ouzo at an affordable price.

The new ouzo brand should be appreciated not only by the traditional ouzo consumers – people with high social status and good income, but also by many young consumers, open to new opportunities on the market. They should be drawn to the new ouzo brand primarily because of the authentic taste of ouzo brand, but young consumers will also appreciate the fact that they receive the required quality at a reasonable price.

We should also consider Segment 3 as second target market. It is formed by a group that has higher income over 650 leva and entertainment interests. Their employment level can be defined as average to small. These consumers spend their free time visiting various cultural events, restaurants etc. Their high solvency and sometimes adventurous nature gives the company the opportunity to experiment on their product.

The characteristics of the consumers that form the primary target market are listed below:

Table 7. Target customers

<i>Consumers' characteristics - primary target market</i>
1. Men and women
2. Age: 18-45 years
3. Number of household members: 3+
4. Income: 400-650 leva
5. Education: secondary, higher

Source: Author's

Ouzo consumption has increased significantly in Bulgaria, as it took a serious market share of mastic and other alcoholic beverages. Ouzo drinking has attracted and won wide popularity among consumers with middle and low incomes, who previously drank only mastic, because of its accessibility. The fine taste and the attractive flavor help ouzo become a favorite summer drink to many of the ladies, who traditionally neglected anise aperitifs several years ago. The ambition is to offer a high-quality, affordable and authentic drink and, through the new ouzo brand – help develop a culture for ouzo consumption in Bulgaria.

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Communication strategy is an important moment in the ouzo positioning on the selected target market. As it was already mentioned the new ouzo brand communication strategy is aimed at acquainting the consumers with the product and by winning their confidence, making them one of the new ouzo brand customers.

Table 8. Marketing activities

<i>Month</i>	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	Sept.	October	November	December
Activities				Facebook Page http://progresive.bg (A piece of news + side banner) Regal magazine (Paid publication in the rubric "Performance") Darik radio	Facebook Page Regal magazine (½ page print advertising) Darik radio Event (presenting the new ouzo brand on the market)	Facebook Page Darik radio Retail promotions Organization of a Greek night at different restaurants/gustation Billboards	Facebook Page Darik radio Radio FM Retail promotions Organization of a Greek night at different restaurants/gustation Promotional materials (flyers, advertising pyramids, posters) Billboards	Facebook Page Darik radio Radio FM Retail promotions Promotional materials (flyers, advertising pyramids, posters)	Facebook Page	Facebook Page Ouzo Festival		
Costs				- 600 lv 780 lv 1250 lv	- 1385 lv 2500 lv 3232 lv	- 2500 lv 7728.8 lv 585 lv 7200 lv	- 2500 lv 1000 lv 7728.8 lv 585 lv 16351.5 lv 7200 lv	- 1250 lv 1000 lv 3864.4 lv 16351.5 lv	-	- 1000 lv		
Total costs per month:				2630 lv	7117 lv	18013.8 lv	35365.3 lv	22465.9lv		1000 lv		
Total marketing costs:	86 592 lv											

Source: Author's

5. Proposal for Budget Allocation for Marketing Activities for the New Ouzo Brand

The main long term market goal is leveling the new ouzo brand's market share (MS) with that of the main competitor (Paralia Ouzo) in the target segment – value segment.

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Market Goals:

- to achieve market share of 30% (in volume) (5 years);
- to offer the new ouzo brand's clients a high quality product that satisfies their needs and meets their requirements and expectations;
- to fill the existing market niche in the value segment.

In order to achieve these goals the following budget allocation for marketing activities for the new ouzo brand has been made.

Table 9. Budget allocation for marketing activities for the new brand

<i>Nº</i>	<i>Marketing elements</i>	<i>Value in lv</i>
1	Costs for media	
1.1	Radio – 2	12000
1.2	Magazines – 1	1985
1.3	Online – 2	780
2	Promotional and event costs	
2.1	Event	3232
2.2	Retail promotions	19322
2.3	Greek night	1170
2.4	Promotional materials	32703
2.5	Ouzo Festival	100
3	Outdoor advertising	
	Billboards	14400
4	Costs for distribution	47404
5	Costs for market research	16000
6	Total Marketing costs	150000
7	Sales revenues for the new ouzo brand – 1 l	568100
8	Sales revenues for the new ouzo brand – 0.700 l	676545
9	Sales revenues for the new ouzo brand –0.200 l	221445
10	Total Revenues	1466090
11	Marketing budget as a percentage of sales	10,2%

Source: Author's

6. Conclusion

The current paper discusses an area of brand management, which requires from modern firms more than just the ability to create and launch new brands on the market - they also need to be more responsible and plan. A brand that has a good quality and is well-established ensures a competitive advantage on the market and, at the same time, requires good management.

The marketing plan proposal can be described as a cycle that begins and ends with evaluation. The final stage of the marketing plan is to measure the results of the marketing activities compared to the original objectives and targets. Continuous evaluation helps companies focus on modifying and introducing new activities in order to achieve certain objectives.

The marketing plan proposal for launching a new brand ouzo brand on the Bulgarian market uses past data to create a new marketing strategy. The proposition is built on brand's competitors and aims at taking advantage of the increasing change of attitudes to using anise products.

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