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# **Current Problems of Banking Sector Functioning in Poland and in East European Countries**



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## MARKETING-MIX STRATEGIES OF BANKS IN POLAND

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**Summary:** Marketing activities of banks implemented since the mid- 90s over time become fully professional. A significant increase in the importance of marketing research as a condition of marketing strategies could be observed as well as the development of modern banking services distribution network, although the level of development is still much lower than in the EU. One could see a rapid increase in the quantity and quality of banks' offer as well as an increase of promotional activities professionalism. Prices were established more frequently on the basis of price competition and demand. Fees and commissions were of increasing importance for banks. There are many different measures for bank marketing activities: sale of loans, deposits, changes in the level of income or capital. Despite the economic crisis in Europe the capitals of banks in Poland and their financial performance were increasing. It can therefore be concluded that marketing and the use of marketing-mix instruments were an important factor in these effects.

**Keywords:** marketing strategies, marketing of banks.

### 1. Introduction

This article attempts to assess the marketing-mix strategies implemented by banks in Poland, especially after the Polish accession to the EU. It is a result of the analysis of secondary sources and the author's own primary research (project funded by the State Committee for the Scientific Research). The author formulates the hypothesis that since 2003 marketing activities of banks and the effects of these activities have been systematically improving.

Marketing activities of banks in Poland were actually taken in a coordinated manner as late as in the second half of the 1990s. As generally known, the premise of all marketing activities should be the previously conducted market research. It gives premises for preparing marketing strategies and can be implemented through marketing organization in banks. It consists in placing a marketing unit in the organizational structure of a bank – the one that is in charge of preparing and carrying

out market research and strategies. In fact, it was only after 2000, and particularly after Poland's accession to the European Union, that the competition between banks in Poland and the marketing strategies pursued by them became fiercer.

## 2. The use of market research by banks in Poland

Over the past few years, banks have considerably increased their financial, human and asset resources, and commenced more mature application of marketing instruments. This involved also expansion of foreign banks onto the Polish market and the concentration process in the banking sector (mergers and buyout of banks). In the period between 1998 and 2002, 29 commercial banks merged with or were acquired by other banks. In the following years there was a slight weakening of this trend but seven more combinations and mergers took place from 2005 to 2009, and three new acquisitions were completed in 2011. Concentration ratios increased in the banking sector with reference to assets, loans and deposits until 2004. In 2012, they achieved the level of ca. 44.3%, 39.1% and 59.6%, respectively, for five biggest banks. In 2012, they slightly increased and at the end of the first half of that year they amounted to 44.8%, 47.4% and 61.6%, respectively. In 2012, they were 63.9% in assets, ca. 49% in loans and ca. 70% in deposits, respectively, for 10 largest banks. However, the number of the banking sector participants in Poland (ca. 700) is still greater than the average in the European Union and, as a consequence, the concentration ratios of the Polish banking sector are lower.<sup>1</sup>

Increased significance of market research in bank strategies has been also noticed. Since the second half of the 1990s, large research companies, i.e. TNS Pentor, Millward Brown SMG/KRC, GfK Polonia, Ipsos, have dominated the financial service research market. Outlays for research in the financial sector increased after 2000. In 2004, they amounted to slightly more than 4% of the total outlays for research in Poland, in 2008 – ca. 6.3%, and in 2009 – ca. 6%, which constituted ca. PLN 30.3 million. In comparison to 2000, outlays for market research of banks increased by over 63%.<sup>2</sup> Research companies prepare systematic reports on the situation on the banking service market, reports on bank individual and institutional customers, bank image, distribution channels, use of bank services, etc. They are prepared on commission of the Polish Bank Association and individual commissions of banks. It needs to be emphasized that the financial service market is monitored on an ongoing basis by marketing units. Moreover,

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<sup>1</sup> W. Grzegorzczuk, A. Sibińska, W. Krawiec, *Funkcjonalność stron internetowych banków a zachowania nabywców na rynku usług bankowych*, Wydawnictwo UŁ, Łódź 2009, pp. 36, 37 and *Raport o sytuacji banków w Polsce w I półroczu 2012 roku*, www.knf.gov.pl [accessed: 10.04.2013].

<sup>2</sup> I. Brzozowska-Poniedziałka, *Badania marketingowe jako narzędzie identyfikacji czynników przewagi konkurencyjnej na rynku detalicznych usług bankowych*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa 2011, pp. 159–161.

before commencing the execution of specific marketing undertakings that are restricted to local markets or regions, banks' marketing units conduct market research independently.

### 3. Marketing activities of banks in the distribution sphere

Changes in the distribution system of banking products were the most noticeable. Rapid development in several directions was observable here.

The first trend concerned the rapid development of stationary distribution. The number of stationary customer service points increased systematically. In 1997, there were ca. 12.4 thousand, in 2008 – over 13.9 thousand, and in late 2012 – as many as over 15.4 thousand of them. The growth amounted to ca. 24.5% in the period between 1997 and 2011.<sup>3</sup> In 2012, no material changes occurred with this respect. There were ca. 2,495 persons per bank outlet, and 401 outlets per one million residents. It was a significant progress relative to 1999 (ca. 310 outlets per one million residents), but it gave Poland the 17th position from among 27 EU member states. In the EU member states, the number of outlets per one million residents is fairly varied – from 365 in Greece, 400 in FRG, to 600 in Portugal and as many as 1,100 in Spain. The Polish distribution system of banking products still considerably diverged from the EU average.<sup>4</sup>

The second trend that occurred in the distribution sphere, particularly after 2004, was the use of franchising service in the network development. According to the bank customer research, over two thirds make cash deposit and cash advance in outlets, 27% transfer funds, and ca. 20% seek information about the bank offer.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, banks decided to shorten the service time, especially in the case of simple banking operations, and network development based on franchising proved to be a means to this end. The most numerous networks of such outlets belong to PKO BP (ca. 2.2 thousand), Getin Bank (275), Bank BPH (236) and Pekao SA (195), Eurobank (135).<sup>6</sup>

The third trend in the distribution sphere of banking products is a strong development of electronic banking in the form of terminal, Internet, telephone and mobile banking. Terminal banking consists in making transactions by means of cash machines and POS terminals. Internet banking employs the Internet with standard software or dedicated software for contact with customers (home

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<sup>3</sup> *Sektor bankowy w Polsce*, ING Securities, 11.01.2008 and *Raport o sytuacji banków w 2012 roku*, UKNF, Warszawa 2012, [www.knf.gov.pl](http://www.knf.gov.pl) [accessed: 20.01.2013].

<sup>4</sup> K. Kochalska, *Odradzają się placówki bankowe*, [www.finance.egospodarka.pl/56408](http://www.finance.egospodarka.pl/56408) [accessed: 15.11.2011] and *Raport o sytuacji banków w 2012 roku*, UKNF, Warszawa 2012, [www.knf.gov.pl](http://www.knf.gov.pl) [accessed: 15.06.2013].

<sup>5</sup> B. Świecka, *Bankowość elektroniczna*, CeDeWu, Warszawa 2008, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> K. Kochalska, *Odradzają się placówki bankowe*, *op. cit.*

banking). Telephone banking serves making banking operations by means of fixed telephony. Mobile banking, in turn, is based on the contact between the customer and the bank by means of mobile telephony or other mobile devices. The above-mentioned types of electronic banking have become widespread and applied by virtually all banks in Poland.

Very fast development of terminal banking has been observable, which is proved by intensive application of cash machines by banks as one of the major distribution tools. Cash machines appeared in Poland on a broader scale in 1995 and there were ca. 500 of them at that time, while in 2003 banks owned over 7.8 thousand cash machines, in 2009 – over 15.9 thousand, and at the end of 2012 – as many as over 18.6 thousand. Over nine years (2003–2012) their number increased by over 138%. PKO BP was the leader on the cash machine market, with its market share of over 14%, followed by Pekao SA, the market share of which amounted to ca. 11% and BZ WBK – with its share of 6.3%. At the beginning of 2013, there were over **485** cash machines per million residents of Poland and a fast growth was noticeable relative to the indicator of 2003, which amounted to **210** pieces. However, this indicator is still by over a half worse than the EU average in 2011, where it was over **850** cash machines per million residents.<sup>7</sup>

What is related to the increase in the number of cash machines is also the increase in the number of cash machine cards that are used by banks for various marketing purposes. In 2000, the number of payment cards exceeded 10 million pieces, in 2003 – 15 million pieces, in 2009 – over 33 million pieces, in 2011 a slight drop in this number to over 32 million pieces was recorded, and in 2012 – to 33.3 million pieces. As can be seen, in the period between 2003 and 2012 the increase in the number of payment cards amounted to 122%. The structure of payment cards is as follows: over 80% are debit cards, 19% are credit cards, and 1% are charge cards. In terms of the technology of recording data on and reading data from cards, circa 44% of cards are magnetic stripe cards and over 56% are microprocessor cards. Cards were issued by all commercial banks but the leader was definitely Pekao SA (ca. 34%) followed by PKO BP (ca. 30%) and ING Bank Śląski (ca. 10%). The decrease in the total number of cards in 2011 by ca. 3% in comparison to 2009 was mainly caused by lower issuance of credit cards and resulted from tightening the credit policy by banks. The changes occurring on the payment card market in Poland led to the achievement of the number of cards per resident at the level of ca. **0.87 of a card**. Yet this indicator was 1.5 cards per person in the majority of EU member states. Despite the intensive growth of the

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<sup>7</sup> H. Kochalska, *Liczba bankomatów w Polsce*, [www.finance.gospodarka.pl](http://www.finance.gospodarka.pl) [accessed: 19.11.2011], Raport NetB@ank – Bankowość internetowa i płatności bezgotówkowe, IIIQ 2013, [www.zbp.pl/public/repozytorium/wydarzenia](http://www.zbp.pl/public/repozytorium/wydarzenia) [accessed: 15.11.2013] and W. Grzegorzczuk, *Marketing bankowy*, *op. cit.*, p. 157.



number and types of payment cards in Poland, quite a significant underdevelopment of the Polish terminal banking relative to the EU level is still noticeable.

Cash machines and payment cards were instruments employed very intensively by banks. They were strictly related to the product policy because they enabled the use of bank offer by fulfilling the role of a means of payment and a credit function. Banks, in turn, can implement the market segmentation strategy and various types of loyalty programmes through them. Adding payment cards to bank accounts facilitates the retention of current customers and the solicitation of new ones. With respect to the use of payment cards by banks, systematic resignation from magnetic stripe cards and their replacement with microprocessor cards were observed. Electronic microprocessor cards are also called electronic purses since these are pre-paid cards. The card transfers the amount at which it was bought to the purchase of goods or services up to the amount coded on the card. It can be also be recharged, e.g. in cash machines or online. Some banks in Poland offer such cards, as well as microprocessor cards with additional services (e.g. entitling to discounts when paying with these cards). New activity in the area was the introduction of **the so-called proximity cards**, particularly for low-value transactions. They have been used in the world since 2002, while in Poland the system of payment with proximity cards was launched in 2007 by BZ WBK by means of Maestro PayPass pre-paid. Since 2010, over 20 Polish banks have offered proximity cards in the form of a key ring or a sticker for any product. The number of these cards grew rapidly and in mid-2011 there were as many as 5.9 million of them, whereas the number of points accepting proximity cards amounted to 25 thousand per the total number of over 250 thousand terminals.<sup>8</sup> In 2012, as many as ca. 30% of payment cards were fitted with the proximity feature. A novelty that occurred in the world in 2010, and in Poland in 2013, is display cards with a display and a screen. They were launched on the Polish market by Mastercard for Getinbank. The account balance, communications from the bank and codes for online operations are displayed.

Internet banking developed at a similar pace to terminal banking. The number of banks using the Internet in the distribution sphere and the number of customers of this distribution form increased. In 2000, merely 60 thousand customers used online banking services, in 2003 there were already 1.9 million of them, in 2006 – over 4.6 million, in 2009 – ca. 7.5 million, in 2011 – as many as ca. 10 million, and in 2012 – 11.5 million.<sup>9</sup> Virtually all banks offer their services via the Internet. It needs to be emphasized that the rapid development of Internet banking was also a factor that intensified market research conducted by or for banks. It regarded

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<sup>8</sup> M. Kieźel, Rozwój kart zbliżeniowych w kontekście potrzeb klientów banków detalicznych, *Studia i materiały Polskiego Stowarzyszenia Zarządzania Wiedzą* 2011, nr 50 and M. Krześniak, Prawie 10 mln osób obsługuje konto przez Internet, *Rzeczpospolita*, 26.10. 2011.

<sup>9</sup> W. Grzegorzczak, A. Sibińska, W. Krawiec, *op. cit.*, p. 38 and Raport Netb@nk..., *op. cit.*

mainly the degree of customer satisfaction with online services and segmentation of online customers of banks.

Another form of distributing banking products is **telephone distribution**. Fixed telephony and devices such as touch-tone telephones interfaced with bank's devices processing text information into voice, videophones and interactive TV sets connected to a device which has a connection with the telephone network. It needs to be stated, however, that this form of distribution has recently lost much of its significance in favor of Internet banking. This is proved e.g. by the number of accounts serviced by call centers, which amounted to ca. 3.5 million in 2007, ca. 6 million in 2008, but in 2009 the increase in this number was very weak – merely ca. 10%, to ca. 6.6 million.<sup>10</sup>

Yet another type of banking product distribution is **mobile distribution**, i.e. the one using mobile telephony for contacting customers. The most common forms of such distribution are SMS banking, WAP (Wireless Application Protocol) and SIM Toolkit (Subscriber Identity Module Application Toolkit). SMS banking uses short text information communicated to the customer by the bank and in the opposite direction. They refer to banking products, such as information about the balance, history of the account, transfers, standing orders, opening deposit accounts, account management. The WAP technology, in turn, enables mobile phone users to access the Internet and in fact is an alternative to PC banking. Thanks to it, one is able to make banking operations in a manner similar to Internet banking. Also here one can make transfers as well as check the account balance and its history, open deposit accounts and apply for loans, and manage payment cards. The operations made by means of mobile distribution can be divided into two groups by access: with general access and restricted access. The former group does not require authorization and refers to the information about the bank offer and the conditions of using it, whereas the latter group refers to the banking services used by a particular customer and has to be authorized thereby. Only the largest banks in Poland employ mobile distribution executed with the above forms. It is estimated that ca. 10% of mobile phone users and bank customers use this form of distribution, which constituted ca. 2 million active accounts (1.8 million SMS accounts, 0.2 million WAP accounts).<sup>11</sup> Yet certain forecasts claim that mobile distribution, especially by means of smartphones, will develop the fastest in the closest future. Mobile payments will be used by means of the NFC technology (payment with a telephone like with a contact-less card).<sup>12</sup> Since 2012, mobile distribution in Poland has concentrated on testing mobile payments only in six banks, i.e. PKO BP, BZ WBK, Citi Handlowy, Bank Milenium, MultiBank

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<sup>10</sup> *Usługi bankowości elektronicznej dla klientów detalicznych. Charakterystyka i zagrożenia*, PFSA Report, Warszawa 2010, p. 86, [www.knf.gov.pl/Images](http://www.knf.gov.pl/Images).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> P. Cegera, Nowości w bankach, *Rzeczpospolita*, 05.01.2012.

together with mBank and ING Bank Śląski. At the end of 2012, mobile payments started to be made under the name of the Orange Cash service prepared by the operator together with mBank and Mastercard. In mid-2013, as many as 22 banks offered mobile distribution. PKO BP presented the iKomórka payment system through which it is possible to make deposits to and withdrawals from cash machines, payments in retail outlets, as well as payment orders and transfers by means of mobile phones. Its competitor, Pekao SA, offered a similar payment system with Peopay smartphones.

In practice, the distribution system of banking products in Poland is a multi-channel system. Stationary distribution was dominant but small branches and customer service points, where increasingly more complex banking products are sold, have gained more and more significance. The role of terminal and Internet distribution has grown but mobile distribution has still had a small share. It may be concluded that the difference between the so-called traditional banks and virtual banks has systematically blurred. What arises from the research conducted systematically in Poland is that the share of Internet and mobile banking in mass payments achieved ca. 35% at the end of 2009. Slightly above 21% of Polish bank customers used online banking but this indicator is considerably lower than the EU average (ca. 32%).<sup>13</sup> This proves a still relatively low level of the modern distribution forms of banking products in Poland in comparison to the EU level.

#### 4. Trends in product, price and special offer policies

Distribution policy is closely related to banks' **product policy**. As already noticed, it is terminal, Internet and mobile distribution that created new banking products, such as payment cards and the possibility to use them. This may involve systematic introduction of product innovations that enhance the functionality of payment cards and increase the scope of additional card's services. They include cash back – a service consisting in the possibility to withdraw small amounts from cash desks when paying for the purchase with a card. Instalment credit was also introduced to the credit card offer along with transfers to any account, the DCC service consisting in settling the transaction payable with the card in the currency in which the card account is maintained. With reference to mobile distribution, new products comprise mobile payment order, topping up the phone account, proximity payment with a SIM card as a payment card.<sup>14</sup>

Another trend in banks' distribution policy and product policy observed particularly after 2000 is the rapid development of the number of products offered by banks. A factor that facilitated this trend was alliances between banks and

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<sup>13</sup> [www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR-INTERNET-EN-PROD000](http://www.dbresearch.com/PROD/DBR-INTERNET-EN-PROD000) [accessed: 21.10.2011].

<sup>14</sup> I. Brzozowska-Poniedzielska, *op. cit.*, p. 294.

insurance companies as well as a strong development of information technologies. New information technologies created the possibility to launch a new banking product onto the market, i.e. the so-called real-time transfers for institutional customers, which are performed by the Sorbnet system with the omission of the Elixir system. Such transfers are still rather expensive but they are completed very quickly (ca. in a few minutes). In the first quarter of 2012, instant transfers were introduced to the offers of large banks, such as ING Bank Śląski, Bank Millennium, BPH SA, BPS. A new offer for instant transfers of low amounts was introduced in 2011 in Poland by Citi Handlowy. It is handled by the Android system and in iPhones. It consists in executing a transfer between two customers with mobile phones. The system reads all data about the transfer based on the information recorded on a SIM card. Only the number of the account from which the transfer is made and its amount are provided, while the transaction is authorized by hitting the phones together. Since the transaction is not secured with a PIN code or a password, the transferred amounts are low: from PLN 50 to PLN 200.<sup>15</sup> Since mid-2012 instant bank transfers in the Express Elixir system have been launched and express transfers executed by Blue Media are offered by four banks. A transfer takes a few seconds and prices for these services are still very high.

The growth of the number of products consisted not only in introducing new products through the application of new technologies. Banks introduced also new products, such as consulting in tax, legal and organizational matters. For instance, in 2011 Toyota Bank added DAS insurance that covers costs of legal advice to business accounts, Idea Bank – accounting services by TAX Care and the possibility to use legal services, and Alior Bank pursues a similar strategy. The prices of such services are at least two times lower than the prices of specialized consulting companies. Certain banks, particularly regional cooperative banks (e.g. Orzesko-Knurowski Bank Spółdzielczy, Śląski Bank Spółdzielczy “Silesia”, Bank Spółdzielczy w Białej Rawskiej, Warmiński Bank Spółdzielczy) offered also the service that was previously provided by market research companies and business information agencies, i.e. preparing reports describing industrial markets and competitors thereon, as well as reports on the position of prospective competitors. The prices of such reports and analyses are not high, beginning with a few hundred PLN.<sup>16</sup> A novelty in the bank offer was also the combination of the accounting service with an online business account. It was directed to small and medium enterprises by ING Bank Śląski and Idea Bank. Through the integration of accounting with a bank account, quick withdrawals for company contractors and determination of the financial position of the account

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<sup>15</sup> S. Dolecki, Bankowość mobilna, Raport Horyzonty bankowości 2011, *Bank* 2012, nr 4.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. M. Samcik, Bank dorzuci do oferty dla firm biały wywiad gospodarczy, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 27.01.2012.

holder are possible. The integration of an online account with the accounting system is also extended by HR and payroll service.<sup>17</sup>

An outstanding innovation in the bank offer is the use of biometrics. This solution, while still uncommon in Western Europe, is almost widespread in Japan. Identities of over 44 million customers of Japanese banks are currently verified by means of the system of blood vessels in a finger or papillary ridges in over 40 thousand branches of banks.<sup>18</sup> In Poland, biometrics was first employed in 2010, when a biometric cash machine was activated in Warsaw by Bank Polskiej Spółdzielczości. In early 2013, there were already over 200 such cash machines in Poland. Cash is withdrawn from a cash machine after entering one's PESEL identification number and pressing a finger against the reader. At the end of 2012, Bank BPH SA applied a slightly different solution, namely customer identity is verified in its 284 outlets and cash machines based on reading the system of blood vessels in a finger.

Cooperation between banks and insurance companies has led to the creation of the term *bancassurance*. A factor facilitating this trend was alliances of banks and insurance companies and strong development of information technologies. It can be pursued in several manners: through the buy-out of insurance company's shares by a bank, establishment of its own insurance company by a bank, or cooperation agreement between a bank and an insurance company. The content of such an agreement may provide for promoting insurance companies in the bank's sales network, selling insurance products in the bank's network, or the so-called cross-selling, that is joint sales of bank products and insurance products. What is the most common is extending the offer of banking products by insurance products, such as insurance of loan/credit, current account, factoring, leasing, payment card, customer's life. They are sold on cross-selling basis. In some cases it is obligatory to purchase an insurance product when buying a loan/credit product – e.g. this refers to mortgage loans and credit card offers. In Poland, cooperation agreements were concluded e.g. by Pekao SA and Allianz Polska, Kredyt Bank and Warta SA, BRE Bank and Generali, Citi Bank and Commercial Union, Bank Śląski and Nationale Nederlanden.<sup>19</sup> Bancassurance can be also used within one capital group: e.g. Kredyt Bank and Warta SA, ING Bank Śląski and ING Życie, Nordea Bank and Nordea Życie. It needs to be stressed, however, that the insurance offer of banks is still modest. Banking products are not directly associated with insurance products, they are frequently modified, and bank employees consider them less important.

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<sup>17</sup> M. Bednarek, Banki wchodzą w księgowość, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 09.04. 2013.

<sup>18</sup> H. Machtyłowicz, Z palcem do banku, *Bank* 2012, nr 11.

<sup>19</sup> M. Śliperski, *Bankassurance w Unii Europejskiej i w Polsce*, Zarządzanie i Finanse, Warszawa 2001, pp. 67–71, and Z. Reda, Polisa z bankowego okienka, *Rzeczpospolita*, 06.10. 2011.

The situation where individual customers' deposits are no longer sufficient for financing credit activities of a given bank has been observable since 2007. Additionally, banks have been unable to offer individual customers beneficial conditions for their current accounts. Some customers shifted to the offer of investment funds then. Bank activities taken since 2008 have been aimed at recovering the lost customer group and their funds. This aim was achieved by extending the service offer, which mainly referred to deposits, enabling the resignation from collecting capital gain taxes, associating bank accounts with privileged or free use of selected insurance services. Development of an offer of services provided exclusively via Internet banking, beneficial for customers, was also noticeable at that time. This was closely related to the **price policy** of banks. They systematically increased fees and charges for banking operations executed in branches or via terminal banking. The result on fees and charges within the result on banking activities grew from PLN 11.46 billion to PLN 14.34 billion, i.e. by ca. 25.1%, in the period between 2008 and 2012, while the result on banking activities increased from PLN 48.44 billion to PLN 58.7 billion, i.e. by ca. 21% over that period. The share of fees and charges in banks' accounting profit grew from ca. 23.6% in 2008 to over 24.2% in 2012; charges for payment cards were relatively high.<sup>20</sup> At the same time, charges for banking operations made via the Internet were relatively very low. Activities directed at price diversification, in particular by the purchaser group criterion, were also noticeable within the price policy. The level of interest margin (the difference between loan and deposit interest rates) also dropped systematically. In the second half of the 1990s, it amounted to ca. 5.7% on average, in 2005 – 4.24%, and it decreased to the level of ca. 4.0% in 2011.<sup>21</sup> A positive aspect of the price policy pursued by banks was the fact that they more and more often included not only the costs of activities but also the prices of competing products, as well as the actual and forecast demand volume, when determining prices of their products.

An extremely intensive growth in the use of special offers by banks was also observable. They limited themselves mainly to advertising and sales promotion actions with this respect. Only large banks applied additionally public relations and sponsoring. Their advertising outlays rapidly increased – they amounted to ca. PLN 286 million in 2004, in 2005 they were as much as 30% higher, i.e. PLN 370 million, in 2008 – ca. PLN 1 billion. In 2010, a slight drop was recorded – to ca. PLN 927 million, but the outlay increase amounted to over 124% over

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<sup>20</sup> Raport o sytuacji banków w Polsce w roku 2010 i 2012, UKNF, Warszawa 2012, [www.knf.gov.pl](http://www.knf.gov.pl) [accessed: 12.03. 2013].

<sup>21</sup> S. Piocha, K. Radlińska, *Konkurencja i konkurencyjność sektora banków komercyjnych*, *Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Koszalińskiej* 2006, nr 2 and *Raport o sytuacji banków...*, *op. cit.*

6 years,<sup>22</sup> whereas in 2012 the amount of banks' advertising outlays exceeded over PLN 1.3 billion. TV commercials in which famous actors and sports people are employed increasingly more often have gained in significance. The initial informative function of the content of advertising messages has changed. Yet mainly over the past four years advertising messages have fulfilled the function of persuading into purchase and have not differed much from advertising messages for tangible property. Advertising messages included e.g. slogans similar to those referring to tangible property, such as "**Attention – sales of loans!!!**" or "**Loans at affordable prices**". Moreover, it was noticeable that advertising messages of certain banks provided incomplete or partly untrue information, or such information was placed in a manner difficult to read (the so-called small print). This led to punishing numerous banks for false advertising. This trend has been disappearing lately as a result of media criticism and banking supervision activities. It needs to be emphasized, however, that promotional actions taken by banks in terms of the content and the form of message, frequency and broadcast duration were executed in a correct and professional manner.

Yet, despite the high increase in advertising outlays, advertisement still was not a significant factor when choosing a bank. Bank selection was mainly determined by comparison of banking offers and recommendation by friends and family.<sup>23</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

The evaluation of the appropriateness of marketing activities pursued by banks and their effectiveness is difficult due to banks' reluctance to provide information about such activities, outlays incurred and their effects. Moreover, such statistical research is not conducted on the scale of the entire banking sector. The majority of banks do not maintain reporting with reference to marketing outlays for individual marketing activities, e.g. for creating new products, analyzing the market position, analyzing simulation of purchaser response to price changes, etc. Therefore, only very general conclusions about the effects of marketing activities taken by banks can be formulated. The bank marketing strategy is a component of a general bank strategy and not only does it contribute to positive results of its strategy, but also its impact is significant. It is assumed that properly prepared and executed marketing activities permit the achievement of the goals set by banks. What can be used here is metrics such as selling loans, accepting deposits, profit level and changes or its share in the financial sector. Over a few past years, a systematic increase in financial, human and asset resources of banks has been recorded. Their funds grew

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<sup>22</sup> M. Kochalska, *Reklamy banków odporne na kryzys*, [www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc dziennik.pl.fl](http://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc dziennik.pl.fl) [accessed: 03.01.2008], Banki hojnie wydają na reklamę, *Media & Marketing Polska*, 14.03.2006 and J. Ramotowski, *Banki pobiły rekord*, [www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl](http://www.obserwatorfinansowy.pl) [accessed 15.10.2013]

<sup>23</sup> A. Tarabasz, *E-komunikacja na rynku usług bankowych*, Wydawnictwo UE, Łódź 2012.

rapidly, i.e. from PLN 37.8 billion in 2001, to PLN 74.5 billion in 2008 (increase by more than 97%), and over PLN 128.8 billion in 2012 (increase by ca. 72%). The capitals of cooperative banks also increased from PLN 1.8 billion (in 2001), to more than PLN 5 billion (increase by 177% in 2008) and PLN 9.0 billion in 2010 (increase by 80%). They accounted for over 8.5% of banking sector's assets.<sup>24</sup> Banks in Poland systematically recorded also profit growth: PLN 7.1 billion in 2004, PLN 11.7 billion in 2010 and PLN 16.2 billion in 2012.<sup>25</sup> The sales of loans and the value of the deposits also increased. In 2005, the value of loans amounted to more than PLN 260 billion (PLN 136 billion for households and PLN 122 billion for enterprises), in 2008 – over PLN 654 billion (PLN 372 billion for households and PLN 234 billion for enterprises) and in 2012 – over PLN 806.4 billion (PLN 533 billion for households and PLN 273.4 billion for enterprises). Thus, the value of the sold loans grew by over 210.2% over seven years. The value of the placed deposits also increased: ca. PLN 220 billion in 2005, over PLN 499 billion in 2008, and over PLN 724.3 billion in 2012. The increase was over 229% over seven years. This allowed banks to stabilize their positions in the financial sector. Their share in the financial sector capitals amounted to ca. 76% in 2003, it dropped to over 66% in 2007, but it grew again in 2010 – to ca. 70%, and in 2012 to ca. 72%.<sup>26</sup>

The share of people using banking services also increased in the group of adults in Poland. In 2003, it amounted to ca. 42%, in 2007 – ca. 68%, in 2009 – over 77%, and in 2012 it grew insignificantly to ca. 78%. It is estimated to reach ca. 82% in 2015.<sup>27</sup> Banks were also positively evaluated by customers. Despite the economic and financial crisis that began in 2009 and was experienced also by banks, their evaluation by customers was positive. In 2007, the percentage of positive opinions amounted to ca. 65%, and in 2010 it grew to over 73%.<sup>28</sup> The level of trust in banks was also high: in 2009, over 49% of customers trusted them, and in 2011 the number was over 56%, which was a considerably higher level than in the EU and the USA (ca. 25%). Only ca. 7% of the bank customers in Poland wanted to change their bank.<sup>29</sup>

The above-mentioned indicators referring to selling loans, deposits, scope of use of banking services in Poland or evaluations of banks prove their systematic development and solicitation of new customers. Hence, it can be concluded that

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<sup>24</sup> Informacja o sytuacji banków spółdzielczych i zrzeszonych, IQ2013, UKNF Warszawa 2013, [www.knf.gov.pl](http://www.knf.gov.pl) [accessed: 15.10.2013].

<sup>25</sup> Raport o sytuacji banków..., *op. cit.*

<sup>26</sup> Raport o sytuacji banków..., *op. cit.*; Rozwój systemu finansowego w 2012 r., [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl).

<sup>27</sup> H. Machtyłowicz, Ubankowanie jako proces naturalny, *Bank* 2013, nr 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Audyt Bankowości Mikroprzedsiębiorstw 2010*, Research International Pentor 2010, [www.pentor.pl](http://www.pentor.pl).

<sup>29</sup> Rośnie zaufanie do banków, [www.prnews.pl](http://www.prnews.pl) [accessed: 09.03.2011] and R. Zasuń, Co trzeci klient nie ufa bankom, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 30.05.2012.



marketing activities pursued by banks contributed to the achievement of such results to a large extent. Through changes in their offers, expansion of distribution networks, intensive promotion, banks were able to increase sales of their products and the number of customers. The evaluation of the marketing activities taken by banks over a few past years is positive.

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## STRATEGIE MARKETINGU-MIX BANKÓW W POLSCE

**Streszczenie:** Działania marketingowe banków realizowane od połowy lat 90. ubiegłego stulecia z czasem stały się w pełni profesjonalne. Zauważyć można istotny wzrost znaczenia badań marketingowych jako przesłanki strategii marketingowych. Rozwijała się stacjonarna i nowoczesna sieć dystrybucji usług bankowych, choć poziom rozwoju jest jeszcze znacznie niższy niż w UE. Widać było szybki wzrost ilościowy i jakościowy oferty banków i wzrost profesjonalności działań promocyjnych. Ceny ustalone były coraz częściej na podstawie cen konkurencji i popytu, coraz większego znaczenia nabierały wśród przychodów banków opłaty i prowizje. Miernikami oceny działań marketingowych banków mogą być sprzedaż kredytów, lokat, poziom i zmiany zysku czy kapitałów banku. Mimo kryzysu gospodarczego w Europie zwiększały się kapitały banków Polsce i ich wyniki finansowe, wzrastała sprzedaż produktów banków. Można więc sformułować wniosek, że działania marketingowe i stosowanie instrumentów marketingu-mix były istotnym czynnikiem tych efektów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** bank, marketing, marketing-mix.