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## MARKETPLACES AND COMMUNITIES IN ONLINE BUSINESS: APPROACHES TO COLLABORATION IN THE UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

### МАРКЕТПЛЕЙСИ ТА СПІЛЬНОТИ В ОНЛАЙН-БІЗНЕСІ: ПІДХОДИ ДО СПІВПРАЦІ В УКРАЇНСЬКОМУ КОНТЕКСТІ

#### ANNOTATION

In the article, the authors point out that domestic business entities targeting mass consumers are increasingly utilizing marketplaces to increase sales volumes. Integration with marketplaces or utilizing their APIs facilitates the automation of the sales process and expands the audience. For many Ukrainian businesses, it's also important to build their customer communities (through social media, and forums) or create online communities on platforms such as Facebook or Telegram. Therefore, the authors emphasize that effective strategies for attracting new customers, increasing sales, and promoting the brand are formed by the cooperation of entities in the Ukrainian online business industry. The article aims to explore approaches to building cooperation between marketplaces, communities, and domestic business entities. The research confirms that the diverse range of marketplaces and communities provides ample opportunities for the development and implementation of cooperation strategies. At the same time, the conclusion is drawn that currently, key strategies for the successful development of modern business include cooperation between marketplaces and communities, such as: product placement on marketplaces, conducting advertising campaigns, active participation in communities, creating own communities by businesses, and interacting with consumers.

**Keywords:** brand, attracting new customers, increasing sales, interacting with consumers, business communities.

#### АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті автори вказують, що вітчизняні суб'єкти бізнесу, спрямовані на масового клієнта, все активніше використовують маркетплейси для збільшення обсягів продажів. Інтеграція з маркетплейсами або використання їх API сприяє автоматизації процесу продажу та розширює аудиторію. Для багатьох українських бізнесів також важливо будувати власні спільноти клієнтів

(через соціальні мережі, форуми) або створення онлайн-спільнот на платформах, таких як Facebook або Telegram. Відтак, автори наголошують на тому, що у контексті швидкого розвитку українського онлайн-бізнесу співпраця між цими суб'єктами відіграє ключову роль у формуванні ефективних стратегій, спрямованих на залучення нових клієнтів, збільшення продажів та популяризацію бренду. Стаття має на меті вивчення підходів до побудови співпраці між маркетплейсами, спільнотами та вітчизняними суб'єктами бізнесу. Дослідження підтверджує, що наявна різноманітність маркетплейсів та спільнот формує широкі можливості для побудови та реалізації стратегій співпраці. Зазначимо, що мова йде про конкретний план дій, який розробляється на основі обраного підходу для досягнення певної мети або розв'язання певної проблеми (до яких можна віднести різноманітність розміщення рекламних оголошень, просування/продажу товарів або послуг, отримання зворотного зв'язку, надавання послуг або підтримки клієнтам, стимулювання покупок, управління відносинами з клієнтами, популяризацію бренду). При цьому зроблено висновок, що наразі ключовими для успішного розвитку сучасного бізнесу є такі стратегії співпраці між маркетплейсами та спільнотами, як: розміщення продуктів на маркетплейсах, проведення рекламних кампаній, активна участь у спільнотах, створення власних спільнот бізнесом та взаємодія зі споживачами. Ці стратегії досить різноманітні за своїм внутрішнім змістом, однак кожна з них допомагає бізнесу відкрити нові можливості та досягти своїх цілей у вирішенні конкретних завдань. Перспективи подальших досліджень полягають у дослідженні впливу стратегій співпраці між маркетплейсами, спільнотами на прибутковість бізнесу та інші фінансові показники та у розробці методики ідентифікації результативності реалізованих стратегій співпраці.

**Ключові слова:** бренд, залучення нових клієнтів, збільшення продажів, взаємодія зі споживачами, спільноти бізнесу.

**Formulation of the problem.** The importance of collaboration between businesses, marketplaces, and communities is growing, thereby increasing their collective influence on the process of systematically generating profit. Indeed, Ukrainian entrepreneurs focusing on mass consumers are actively leveraging marketplaces to boost their sales. Integration with these platforms or utilizing their APIs facilitates sales process automation and grants access to a broad audience. Moreover, many Ukrainian businesses must establish their customer communities, achievable through social networks, forums, or even by creating their online community on platforms such as Facebook or Telegram. In the fast-evolving landscape of Ukrainian online business, the collaboration between businesses, marketplaces, and communities is pivotal in crafting effective strategies directed toward acquiring new customers, boosting sales, and enhancing brand promotion.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Research on the application of marketplace services and communities for the development of domestic online business has been the subject of numerous academic works, including those by scholars such as Kovshova I.O., Glumilina M.O., Zabashtanska T., and Savitska N.L. Significant contributions to the study of the features of cooperation between marketplaces, communities, and domestic business entities have been made by the following scholars: Prosovykh O.P., Botsman Yu.S., and Chmil H.L. However, questions regarding the specific action plan for building cooperation between marketplaces, communities, and domestic business entities remain insufficiently studied and require further clarification.

**Formulation of the purposes of the article.** The article aims to explore approaches to building cooperation between marketplaces, communities, and domestic business entities.

**Presentation of the main research material.** Collaboration between marketplaces, communities, and domestic business entities is a category that defines the approach to achieving various goals, such as attracting new customers, increasing sales, and promoting the brand. So, among the key advantages of such cooperation [6–7]:

1. Access to a large audience. Indeed, marketplaces and communities have a large base of active users, which allows businesses to attract the attention of new customers who are already interested in products or services.

2. Increased brand awareness. Placing products on marketplaces and actively participating in communities allows the brand to become more prominent in the market and enhance its recognition among consumers.

3. Increased sales. Attracting new customers and enhancing brand awareness leads to growth in sales volumes, which in turn contributes to business development.

4. Interaction with consumers. Active participation in communities allows businesses to establish a close connection with their customers, understand their needs and preferences, and receive valuable feedback on products and services.

Marketplaces and communities have different functionalities and can offer diverse advantages for businesses.

In particular, according to the scientific literature [1; 4], marketplaces suitable for business collaboration are classified based on the characteristics of their offerings into product, informational, investment, service-oriented, or multi-profile marketplaces. In Ukraine, the outlined cooperation is predominantly implemented through product marketplaces, the main ones of which are listed in Table 1.

Table 1

Description of the main marketplaces open for collaboration with businesses

Marketplaces	Characteristics of marketplaces	Type	Benefits of use
Rozetka	Offers a wide range of products, including electronics, household appliances, clothing, and much more. Rozetka is especially popular due to its fast and reliable delivery service. Offers a wide range of services, such as personalized product sourcing and custom-made products upon individual request	Product-oriented, service-oriented	Convenient shopping platform, wide selection of products and services, reliable delivery
Prom	Offers a wide range of products, including industrial equipment, office supplies, and raw materials	Product-oriented	A wide selection of products for businesses, the possibility of finding non-standard items
“Allo”	Offers a wide range of electronics and gadgets, such as smartphones, laptops, tablets, and gaming consoles	Product-oriented	High quality of service, wide selection of technology.
Lamoda, Wildberries	Offers a wide range of products, including electronics, books, clothing, and much more. Offers a huge selection of services, such as personalized sourcing.	Product-oriented	Wide selection of goods and services, convenient delivery
AliExpress, eBay	Offers a wide range of products, including electronics, books, clothing, and much more.	Product-oriented	Wide range of products at affordable prices
Uber	Offers services for tracking available taxis, tracking their routes, and allows payment for services directly through the smartphone app	service-oriented	Convenience and speed of transport service delivery

Source: formed based on [1; 4; 7]

Among the main types of social communities oriented towards cooperation with businesses are: professional networks, corporate communities, customer communities, communities for collaboration on marketing projects [2; 6].

These social communities help businesses maintain connections with employees, clients, and partners, facilitate the exchange of experiences and ideas, and promote collaboration on projects and tasks.

The diverse range of marketplaces and communities creates ample opportunities for building and implementing cooperation strategies between marketplaces, communities, and businesses. Noted that we are referring to a specific action plan developed based on the chosen approach to achieve a certain goal or solve a particular problem (which may include a variety of aspects such as advertising placement diversity, promotion/sale of products or services, obtaining feedback and providing services or customer support, attracting attention and stimulating purchases, managing customer relationships, and brand promotion and authority in the field [1; 5–6]). These cooperation strategies are combinatorial, formed as sets of actions from [1–2; 6]:

1. Placing products on marketplaces (interpreted as e-commerce platforms, online stores), which effectively advertise the seller's goods. This direction is advantageous primarily for small businesses that do not need to invest in their platform for sales.

2. Advertising campaigns on online marketplaces (interpreted as a marketing tool to promote specific products and services on these platforms).

3. Active participation of the business in communities (interpreted as an approach to interaction with potential and existing customers, aimed at building and maintaining relationships, mutual information exchange, and creating value for all community participants).

4. Businesses creating their communities (interpreted as an approach to interacting with the audience, aimed at building a user community centered around a specific brand, product, or idea).

5. Business interaction with consumers (interpreted as an approach to engaging with consumers through comments, feedback, and personal messages that help maintain positive customer relationships and foster long-term connections).

These strategies are quite diverse, yet each of them helps businesses uncover new opportunities and achieve their goals in addressing specific tasks.

So, the strategy of placing products on marketplaces is an important element of many domestic companies' business organization, as it allows them to attract the attention of new customers who actively search for goods on such well-known e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces as Rozetka, Prom.ua, or OLX. Among the main components of this strategy (Fig. 1) are: platform selection, product listing optimization, assortment management, pricing, inventory management and order fulfillment, marketing and advertising, results analysis, and optimization.

One example of successful collaboration between a business and a marketplace in Ukraine is the partnership between "ABC Electronics" (a manufacturer and seller of electronics and home appliances [1]) and the Rozetka marketplace. Through this collaboration, "ABC Electronics" has gained the following advantages: access to an audience of 7 million clients actively searching for products on the platform, increased brand recognition among customers, and a 30 % increase in sales volume by attracting new customers who regularly use Rozetka for their purchases. Many customers consider marketplaces to be reliable sources for purchases, and if they see "ABC Electronics" products on such a marketplace (with a high rating system and positive reviews), they identify the business entity's brand as trustworthy.

The strategies for business collaboration on advertising campaigns on marketplaces aim to expand opportunities to attract attention to the business's products among users of such platforms. Among the main components of this strategy (see Figure 2) are: audience targeting; use of keywords; analysis and optimization of results; creation of attractive offers.

These strategies help businesses expand their advertising opportunities to attract attention to their products and increase sales through marketplaces. The advertising campaign of "TechMag" (a manufacturer and seller of household appliances such as refrigerators, washing machines, and microwave ovens [1]) on the Prom.ua marketplace is a characteristic example. "TechMag," utilizing targeted advertising, configured its campaigns to display advertisements to users actively searching for household appliances on Prom.ua. The company regularly analyzed the effectiveness of its advertising campaigns on Prom.ua and made necessary adjustments to achieve better results. As a result of this collaboration, there was an increase in attention to "TechMag" products among Prom.ua users, an increase in traffic to their product pages, and a 35 % growth in sales.

The following are the key elements of active business participation in communities. Businesses can actively engage with user communities on social media or forums discussing their industry. Among the key components of this strategy are the establishment of the business's community, active participation in existing communities, valuable content creation, and organizing contests and promotions (see Figure 3).

These strategies help maintain audience interest, create a positive brand perception, and increase customer loyalty. "TechExperts" actively participates in communities and forums for professionals in the information technology field. They regularly publish interesting and relevant content about new technologies, provide tips on managing IT projects, and offer solutions to common problems. Additionally, they organize webinars and online courses for community members, allowing them to further engage their audience and showcase

their expertise. This activity helps “TechExperts” increase brand awareness and attract new clients to their business.

Components of the strategy for creating business-owned communities on social media platforms, forums, or messengers, where clients can

discuss products, share experiences, and ask questions to company representatives. Among the key components of this strategy are audience engagement, communication and interaction, providing useful information, community support, and customer engagement (see Figure 4).

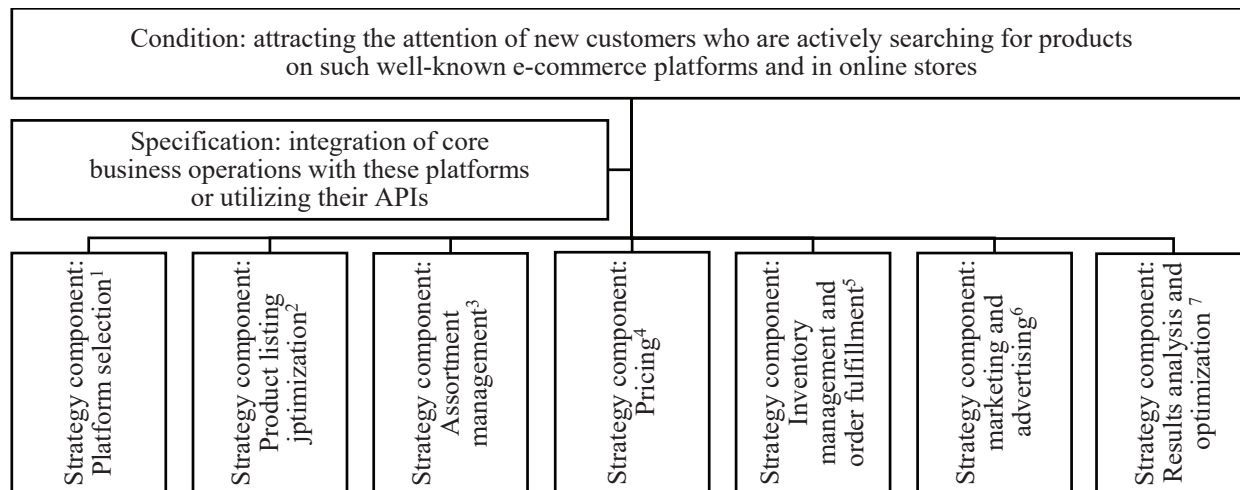


Figure 1. Components of the business strategy for placing products on marketplaces

Note

1. Choosing the platform that best suits the business, taking into account factors such as target audience, competition, commission rates, customer support services, and so on.
2. Ensuring the optimization of product listings on the marketplace for search engines and attracting buyer attention. The focus should be on keywords, descriptions, high-quality images, and other elements that can enhance the attractiveness of your product.
3. Determining which products should be listed on the marketplace. It's important to ensure that the assortment offered by the business entity aligns with the needs of the target audience. Consideration should be given to the possibility of adding new items or removing less popular products.
4. Determining the correctness of pricing, which is important for ensuring the competitiveness of the business entity's brand in the marketplace. Consider competitor prices, as well as your own expenses and pricing strategy.
5. Ensuring efficient inventory management processes and order fulfillment to ensure fast delivery and high levels of customer satisfaction.
6. Supporting the business entity's presence on the marketplace through marketing and advertising to help attract more attention to your products and increase sales.
7. Continuous analysis of the business entity's presence in the marketplace and making adjustments to the strategy based on the data obtained. Optimizing product listings, pricing, and marketing campaigns to increase the effectiveness of your business in the marketplace.

Source: formed based on [1–2; 5–6]

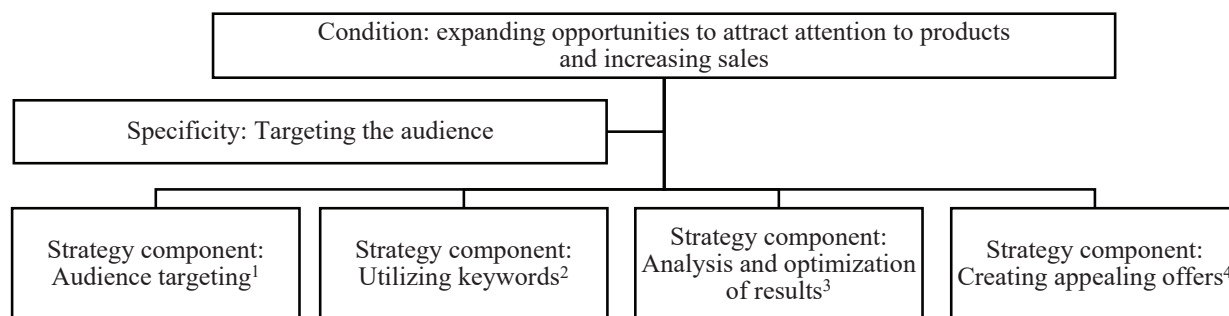


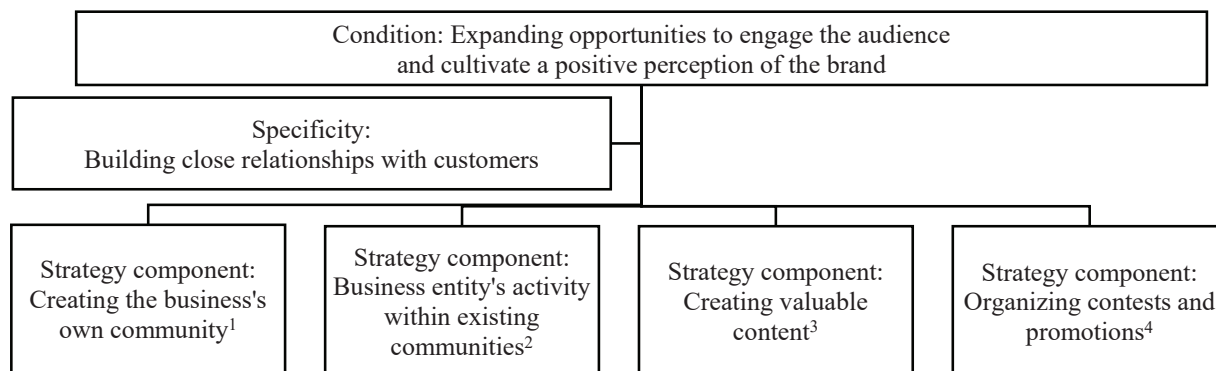
Figure 2. Components of business strategies for advertising campaigns on marketplaces

Note

1. Advertising campaigns can be tailored to target specific audience segments actively using the marketplace.
2. Integration of keywords used by potentially interested customers during product searches helps ensure that the advertising reaches relevant audiences.
3. It's important to continually analyze the results of advertising campaigns on marketplaces and optimize them to achieve the best outcomes. It may involve changing keywords, creative elements, budget settings, and so on.
4. It's important to create advertisements that stand out and capture the attention of potential customers. High-quality content, vibrant images, and attractive offers can attract more attention.

Source: formed based on [2–3; 5; 7]



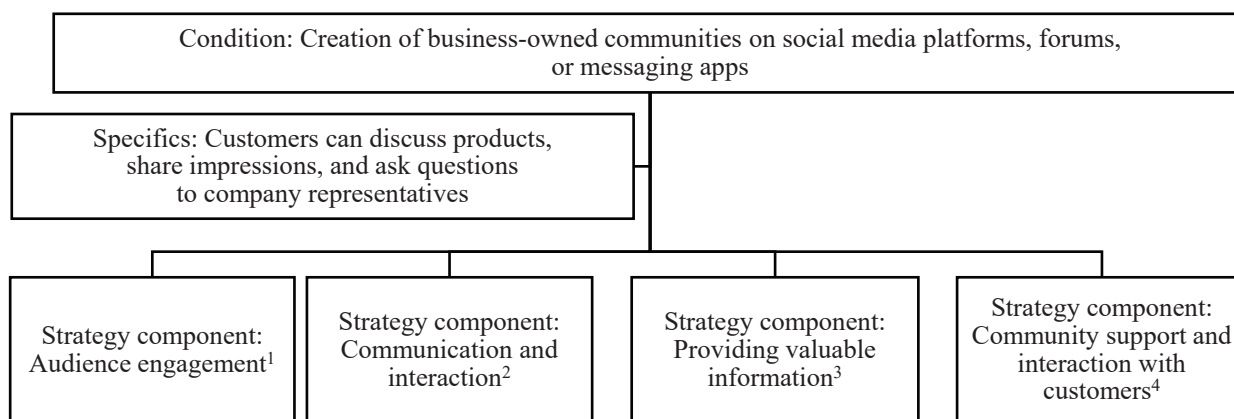


**Figure 3. Components of the strategy for active business participation in communities**

*Note*

1. Businesses can create their own groups or pages on social media, forums, or chat platforms to communicate with their customers.
2. Businesses can actively participate in discussions within existing communities that relate to their field of activity.
3. Businesses can regularly publish interesting and useful content on their social media channels or within community forums.
4. Businesses can regularly organize contests, promotions, or giveaways within their community to attract attention and increase engagement with customers.

Source: formed based on [2; 4–5; 7]



**Figure 4. Components of the strategy for creating business-owned communities on social media platforms**

*Note*

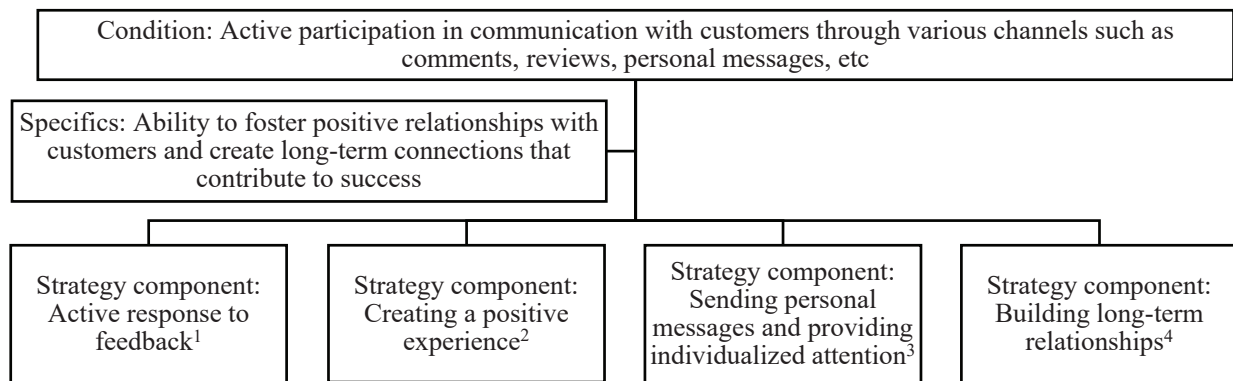
1. The business creates a community to engage its customers, supporters, or those interested in the company's field of activity.
2. The created community provides a platform for communication among members and discussion of topics of interest to the group.
3. The business can provide community members with valuable information such as tips, news, exclusive materials, or discounts.
4. This allows the business to maintain close relationships with customers, understand their needs and desires, and provide them with support and answers to questions.

Source: formed based on [1–2; 4–5]

Creating its community allows a business to increase interaction with its audience, raise brand awareness, and attract the attention of new customers. One example of a successful strategy for creating its own community business could be the case of the “Healthy Living” company on the Telegram messenger platform. Within this community, the business entity publishes useful content such as nutrition tips, fitness exercises, recipes for healthy meals, and more. During interactions with community members, company representatives address questions regarding their health and lifestyle, provide recommendations on choosing products from the “Healthy Living” company, and share useful tips. Additionally, the company organizes weekly webinars and online training sessions for community members on topics

related to healthy eating, fitness, and psychology. This strategy has allowed “Healthy Living” to build a strong community of supporters, increase brand awareness, and attract the attention of new customers who share common values and interests.

The components of the strategy for interacting with consumers include active engagement in communication with customers through various channels such as comments, reviews, direct messages, etc. [2; 4]. Among the key components of this strategy are actively responding to feedback, creating a positive experience, personal messages, and individual approaches, and building long-term relationships (see Figure 5). The experience of the “EcoFruit” company is a specific example. They specialize in selling organic products and fruits. “EcoFruit” actively interacts with its customers



**Figure 5. Components of business interaction strategies with consumers through active communication**

*Note*

1. *Businesses should actively listen to their customers' feedback and respond to it. It includes acknowledging positive reviews, expressions of gratitude, and addressing any concerns or negative situations.*
2. *Businesses should ensure a positive customer experience through interactions. It includes providing prompt and effective support and responding promptly to their inquiries.*
3. *Interaction through personal messages allows businesses to build personalized relationships with customers, understand their needs, and provide individualized support.*
4. *Interactions help create long-term relationships with customers, which is important for retaining their loyalty and increasing their brand loyalty.*

*Source: formed based on [2; 4–6]*

through social media, particularly through its Instagram page. They regularly post photos of their products and share useful information about organic nutrition and a healthy lifestyle. “EcoFruit” is responsive to customer comments and concerns.

For instance, when customers express interest in specific types of fruits or vegetables, the company quickly responds and includes them in their assortment. Therefore, the interaction between the business and consumers is not only a way to solve problems and negative situations but also an opportunity to maintain positive relationships with customers and create long-term bonds, to which the company’s success contributes.

**Conclusions from the research.** Within the study, it has been demonstrated that the diversity of marketplaces and communities forms extensive opportunities for the construction and implementation of collaboration strategies among marketplaces, communities, and businesses. The concept refers to a specific action plan developed based on a chosen approach to achieve a particular goal or address a specific problem. This can include a variety of actions such as advertising placement diversity, product or service promotion/sales, feedback collection and customer service provision, attracting attention and incentivizing purchases, customer relationship management, and brand and authority promotion within the industry. Consequently, it has been concluded that collaboration strategies between marketplaces and communities are key to the successful development of modern businesses, enabling them to leverage opportunities such as:

6. Product placement on marketplaces, which allows businesses to access a wide audience and increase sales volumes by promoting their goods on popular e-commerce platforms.

7. Focusing advertising campaigns on promoting the products or services of a specific business on an e-commerce platform using advertising tools.

8. Engaging with user communities on social media or forums, allowing businesses to build a positive brand perception and maintain audience interest.

9. Creating own communities, enabling businesses to attract an audience and build a user community united around a specific brand, product, or idea.

10. Interacting with customers to maintain positive and long-term relationships.

Future research prospects lie in developing a methodology for identifying the effectiveness of implemented strategies of collaboration between marketplaces, communities, and businesses.

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