

DAILY MADE BRAND POWER MEASUREMENT

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Introduction

The most recognized element of power in the case of daily newspapers is most likely its reach, however this is not the only element neither the strongest one. The development of the market and increasing competition are forcing brands to set its position on the market as well as in the eyes of consumers. However brand power is essential for establishing the sales value and brings useful information about strengths and weaknesses of the brand.

As well as we can say that the brand with the highest market share is not necessary the strongest one, we can say the same for daily newspapers. The most read newspaper is not necessarily the most powerful one.

Newspapers all over the world exploit the possibilities given from digital media and widen the public using internet to spread their content. But how does this fact influence the future of newspapers themselves? There is no doubt that while opportunities given by digital media can ease the newspapers business in so many ways, traditional printed editions are losing their readers. One of the most read daily newspapers in Slovenia lost around 65.000 or approximately one third of its readers in the last three years¹. And this is no exception. Trend shows that most of the daily newspapers in Slovenia are losing their audiences within the past few years and beside that the number of different daily newspapers read by an individual is also decreasing. On the other hand visiting on-line editions is expanding. The case of previously mentioned daily newspaper in Slovenia shows that there are almost 100.000 more daily visitors to on-line edition than readers of printed edition.

So there are obviously some changes in the market that influences everyday consumption of daily newspapers.

In 2002 there was 43 % of Slovenian population generally agreeing with the statement that they read daily newspapers everyday. This percentage is constantly decreasing and in 2008 it reached the 39 %. This may not be the most significant difference but considering the following data we should consider this as important. In 2002 there were 17 % of those who generally agreed with the statement that when they need information the first place to look is the internet. By the 2008 this percentage has more than tripled and reached 46 %. It is quite a significant difference.

Another aspect that should be considered is free daily newspapers which penetrated an almost closed or satiated market. Those newspapers are aimed at general public in metropolitan areas; they have a relatively cheap distribution system compared to paid newspapers, have a small editorial staff, which all lead to lower costs. Free newspapers are competition to paid newspapers.²

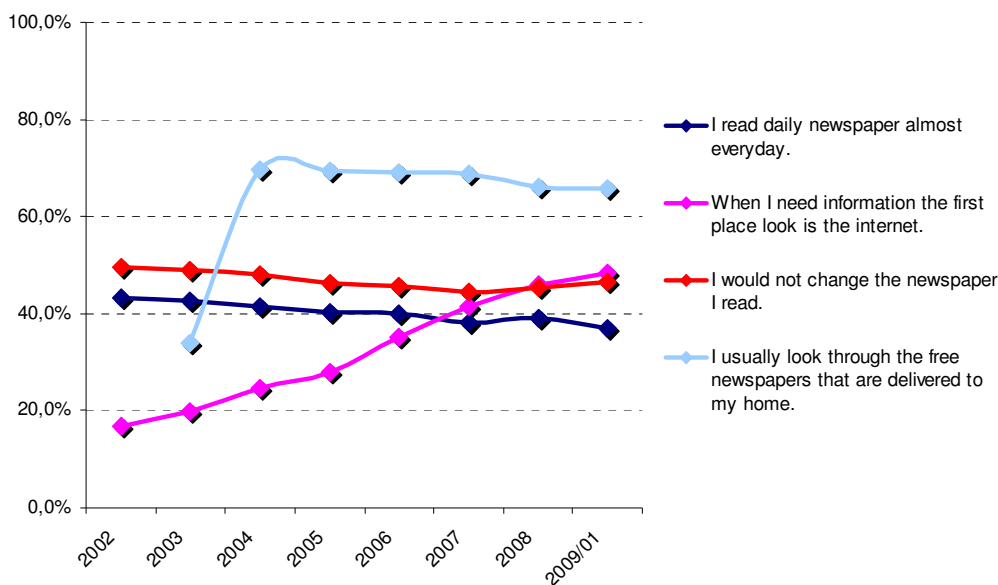
The only free daily newspaper in Slovenia is also the only daily newspaper in Slovenia that managed to increase its reach from 2008 to 2009. And while there were “only” 34 % of those who agreed with the statement that they usually go through free newspapers in 2002 the percentage has almost doubled and reached 66 % in 2008³.

¹ <http://www.nrb.info/podatki/index.html>

² Piet Bakker: **Reinventing newspapers** Free dailies - readers and markets1
<http://www.newspaperinnovation.com/wp-content/uploads/bakker2002.pdf>

³ Mediana TGI

Chart 1: Attitude toward news of Slovenian population – agreeing with statements



source: Mediana TGI

Nonetheless we should not ignore the fact that newspapers still remain the most trusted medium and have very strong impact on its audience. But there is clearly something going on in the market and the main goal of the following research is to determine readers’ behaviour, habits and motivation in correlation with daily news.

Dailies have become a guarantee of credible news and information, and are adopted by other media, businesses and consumers as well. The entire public relations industry is interested in earning newspaper coverage for companies that seek to improve their reputation, public identity and nonetheless their power. Newspapers hence play an important role as a brand builder but on the other hand we need to consider that to achieve this goal, newspapers (their creators as well as the audience) need to build up their own brand.

Part of the reason newspaper brands are so pervasive is because they gracefully capture their audience offline and online. According to the current Nielsen Online numbers, people visiting newspaper sites hit a new high in the first quarter with an average of 73.3 million unique users, a 10.5% jump compared to the same period in 2008⁴. This fact is consistent with our findings. According to Mediana TGI Slovenia, the number of visitors of most visited online editions of daily newspapers almost tripled in last four years.

Case study

Daily newspapers can be educative and informative. They can be entertaining and delightful and they can provoke and inspire the debate in everyday life. Perception of the newspapers from the audience point of view vary based on the importance they put to different elements and if one needs to compare results with the results of the other brand, it is necessary to have a standardized measurement tool that can provide such results.

Mediana developed a tool to measure brand power tailor made for newspapers where various elements are measured to determine the overall brand power of each daily newspaper. Elements such as awareness, transaction, publication’s influence, confidence in its content, trust, loyalty, usage of on-line editions, regional and national strength and after all its social and educational role are just basic elements that determine brand power. Each of these elements can be additionally structured. For example: when measuring transaction it is important to determine subscribers, and other readers and readers themselves are categorized according to their motives.

Dailies can of course serve also as opinion makers. Topics, covered by their journalists and followed by their readers can be understood as base for everyday discussion with friends, relatives, coworkers and other person we meet on a daily basis. Even though this component can not be recognized as important from reader’s point of view, we should not neglect the importance of this element regarding the building of the brand, since WOM itself can influence on many other components from awareness to reputation of the brand.

⁴ http://www.mediapost.com/publications/?fa=Articles.showArticle&art_aid=107446

Mediana research model is focusing on two aspects of the current situation on the daily newspapers market. First we will recognize what influences the reading habit of the audience, namely why they decide to choose to read the specific newspaper, how they follow news and their general behavior in correlation with daily newspapers.

Second aspect of the research model is focused on individual components of the daily newspapers, their importance through the eyes of audience and nonetheless the weight of each component in relation to overall power of the newspaper as a brand.

Another component that plays an important role in branding is emotions. Audience is emotionally involved in their behavior and therefore "companies spend millions to ensure that their audience more than gets the message they want to send by incorporating music, sounds, images, vivid color and celebrities to trigger huge sensory responses towards their product, company or innovation"⁵.

We conducted a pilot case study using CAWI (computer assisted web interviewing) on sample of 342 people from Slovenia, aged from 15 to 65 years old and representative by gender, age and region. The survey was online from 26th to 28th August 2009. In the following paragraph of this paper we are presenting basic findings of the survey and how to measure brand power of individual brand among daily newspapers.

Dailies as brands

According to our study all dailies in Slovenia have very high awareness. The only exception is a specialized sports daily newspaper and one local newspaper that became daily only few years ago. All other, including the only free daily that was first released at the end of 2007, are recognized by the high majority of respondents (approximately 90 % on aided recall). To reveal actual differences we need to examine Top of mind recall where the most recognized daily newspaper in Slovenia reached awareness of approximately 36 %, which is more than three times more than the percentage of regular readers of this newspaper. All daily newspapers, included in the survey are mostly reached either by personal subscription or personal purchase.

Another interesting aspect is the fact of very high loyalty of the readers. Majority of readers intend to continue reading their daily newspapers at least in the same amount and a small percentage intend even to increase their transaction. We can conclude that approximately 90 % of readers will at least continue to follow their dailies in the nearest future.

The question is how this influences the strength of the brand. Of course there are differences between individual dailies in the case of awareness, transaction and loyalty, but the question is if these elements are the only ones that influence the strength.

Importance of elements

In the study presented in this paper we have measured different components of the brand using hard facts as well as emotional aspects to recognize some insights. Many different elements of the daily newspaper as a brand were measured from basic awareness and transaction to more detailed and specified such as perception of journalists, news, etc.

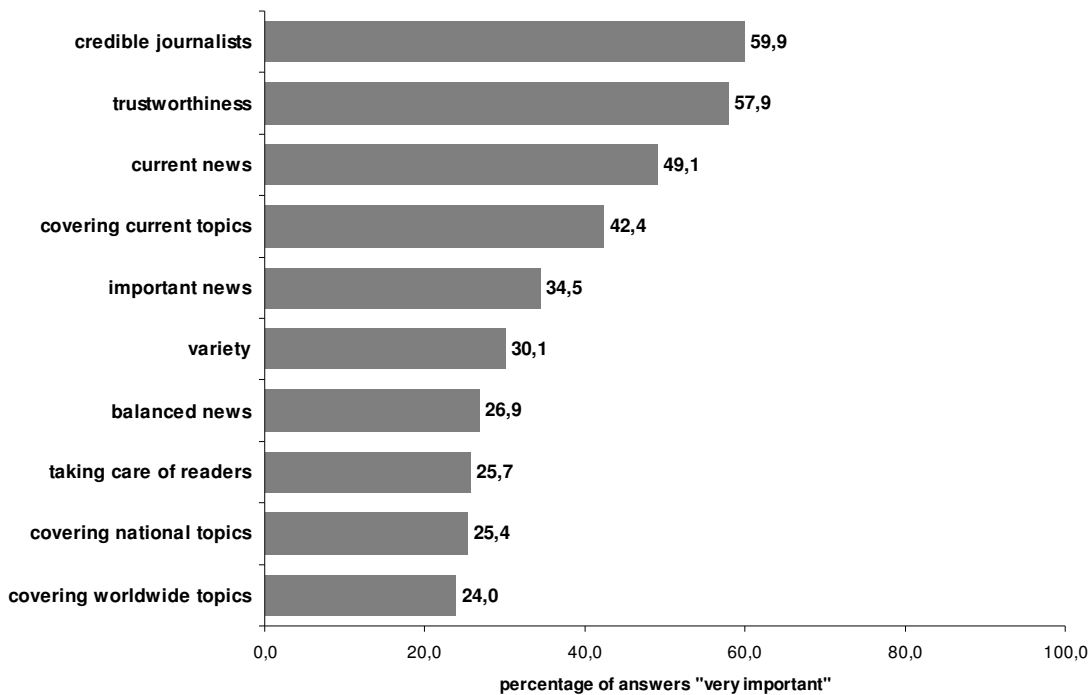
According to our respondents different elements have different influence on their decision concerning which daily newspaper to read.

From the following chart we can read out how important each element is, but to determine the actual strength of the brand we need to correlate these results with another dimension namely how each of these elements apply to individual brand. As we can see the most important elements are:

- Credibility of journalists,
- Trustworthiness,
- Covering current news,
- Covering current topics,
- Importance of news,
- Variety of news,
- Balance of news,
- Taking care of readers,
- Covering topics on national level,
- Covering topics on worldwide level

⁵ http://www.brighternaming.com/brands_of_emotion.html

Chart 2: Top ten most important elements when choosing the daily newspaper



source: Mediana; CAWI; N=342

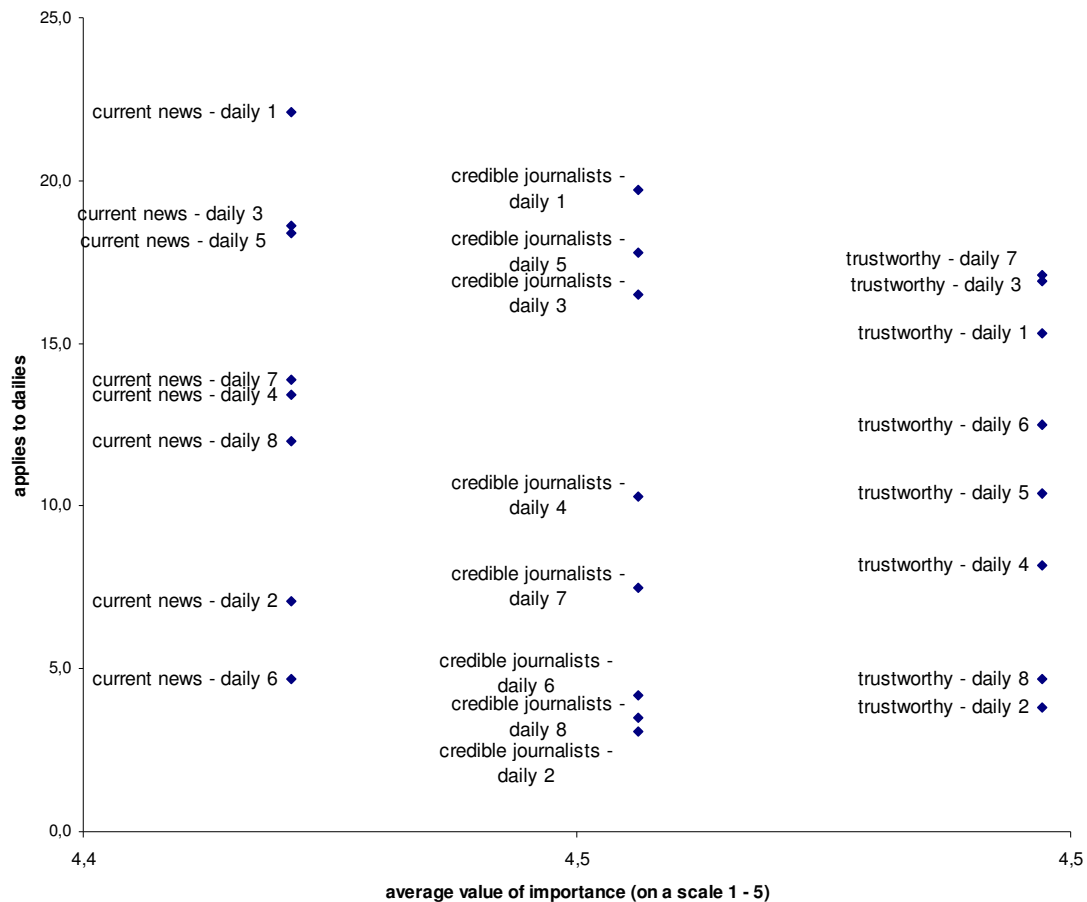
We saw the importance of individual elements but to determine the actual power of each brand we need to determine how these elements correlate with individual daily newspaper. If we take for example first three most important elements it is necessary to include how they apply to each newspaper in order to determine the brand power of individual newspaper.

In the following chart we represent 8 cases of Slovenian daily newspapers that were covered in the survey. Each newspaper has two coordinates. X coordinate represents the importance of the individual element and Y coordinate represents in what extent each element applies to individual newspaper.

What we determine is that newspapers 1 and 3 stand the strongest (top three) in all three most important elements suggesting that these two daily newspapers are the strongest in Slovenia.

We get the identical result also if we analyze all elements that were included in the survey, where for example the strongest daily newspaper brand gets the highest score on more than half of measured elements.

Chart 3: Position of daily newspapers as brands



source: Mediana; CAWI; N=342

Customization of model

As already mentioned we can take different aspects of brand power into consideration. The advantage of such model is to examine each brand according to individual characteristics. At the beginning we determined that awareness and loyalty are those elements where all daily newspapers in Slovenia stand very high. But what if we for example take a look at newspaper's role as an opinion maker? Most of our respondents intend to communicate with others about what they have read in the newspapers. However there is one newspaper that stands out if we take into consideration daily correspondence with significant others. The same newspaper also got the highest value on loyalty and covering regional and local topics. Looking at the whole picture this newspaper gets the fifth place in overall brand power but this can be easily explained with the fact that this newspaper is more focused on one particular area, since this is a local newspaper. And although available on the entire Slovenian market this same newspaper has the highest awareness and transaction specifically in this particular region. Meaning that by narrowing or better said setting the target group it is easy to determine brand position of each daily. In other words, as well as in case of other brands there is no guarantee that the strongest brand on the national level is indeed the strongest in a particular target group.

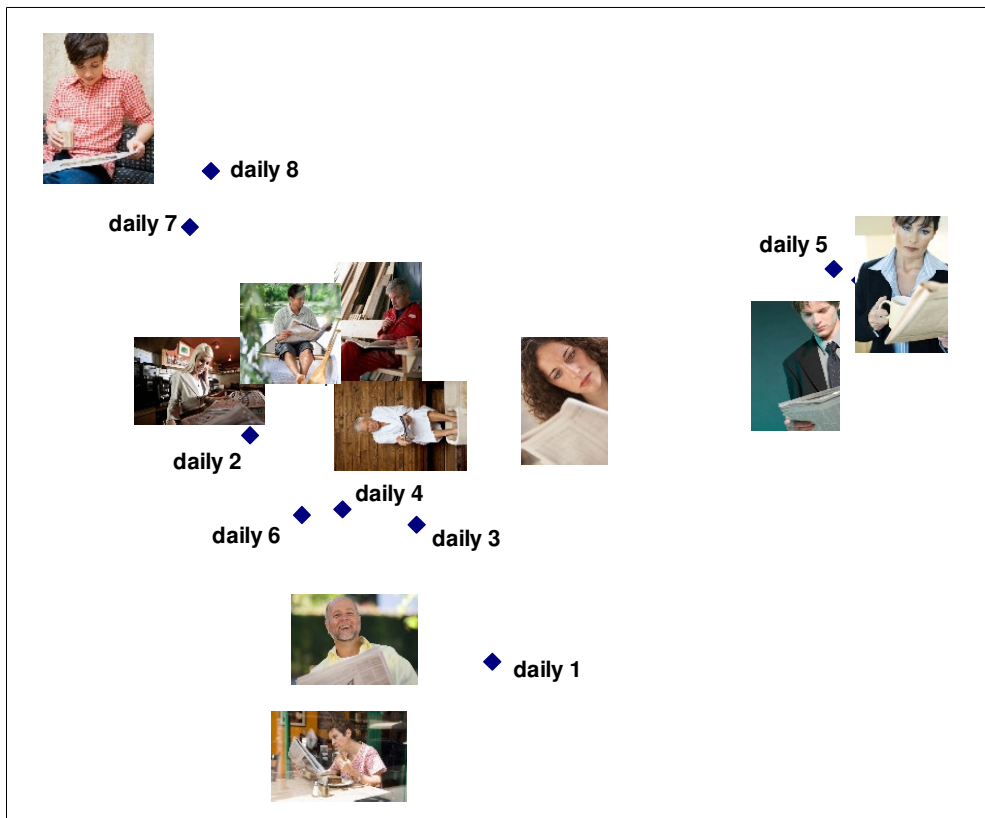
But we can examine this brand power also from another aspect. It is almost impossible to expect that the strongest brand in general get the highest value on all elements. As already mentioned the strongest daily newspaper according to our research was evaluated the highest on more than half of the elements. Meaning that there are elements where competition is stronger and by evaluation of each component one is capable to detect weaknesses and focus on improvement and also building its strongest components.

However there is an alternative way to measure dailies' success on individual element. Trends in marketing research show that direct question can unwillingly lead to socially expected answers instead of truthful opinion. That is why we tested how and if results would change if we consider a different approach.

Using CAWI method allows us to implement visual contents such as photos. We have introduced to our respondents different photos of people reading newspaper and asked them which Slovenian daily newspaper they read according to the impression they get from the person on the photo.

One of the results was a perceptual map, shown on the chart below.

Chart 4: Position of daily newspapers in Slovenia



source: Mediana; CAWI; N=342

In order to determine characteristics of daily newspapers using this approach we once again introduced the same set of photos and asked our respondents what they think about person’s personality, thoughts etc.

The results from this approach are consistent with previously discussed results, meaning that individual daily newspapers in Slovenia differ from each other according to their characteristics given by our respondents. Let us for example look at person who is the closest to daily 1 according to the correspondence map. In our case study this person was described as fun, trustworthy, nice, optimistic, current, diverse, and careful and he or she is thinking about current news while reading the daily newspaper. These characteristics represent two facts, at least:

- All characteristics are positively oriented
- Most of the characteristics correspond to the previously determined elements that influence the strength of the power.

Conclusion

What was the purpose of measuring strengths of the brand in case of daily newspapers? First, but most likely the most important reason is to determine that daily newspapers as brands do not differ significantly from other brands or better to say act almost the same as any other brands on the market. This means that consumers’ emotions as well as rational behavior play an important role in brand power.

By analyzing wide range of all the elements of brand power and their importance as well we are able do determine the following:

- How, and even more important, which elements determine power of an individual brand.
- Position of an individual brand compared to its competitor(s).
- Revealing strengths and weaknesses of an individual brand what allows us to prepare the appropriate strategy to strengthen the brand or maintain its position.
- Each brand can be evaluated as a brand on a national level as well as brand of more specific segment, determined either by socio-demographics, region or any other variable.

Therefore the model can be used as a method to measure the current position as well as a method to determine where to focus in order to improve or at least maintain one’s position.

Let us conclude with another interesting finding. Our original hypothesis was that reach itself is an important factor, but not the only factor that influences brand power. As seen from the table below: two Slovenian daily newspapers with the highest reach have indeed the lowest brand power calculated, using our model.

Table 1: Comparison of brand power and reach of Slovenian dailies - rank

	BP	reach
daily 1	1	3
daily 3	2	5
daily 4	3	4
daily 5	4	8
daily 6	5	6
daily 7	6	7
daily 8	7	2
daily 2	8	1

