

## The Impact of H2H on Communication Processes in International B2B

*Anna Makhmudova*<sup>1</sup>

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**Annotation.** The article focuses on analyzing the impact of the Human-to-Human (H2H) concept on communication processes in the field of international B2B marketing. The aim of the study is to identify the characteristics and advantages of applying the H2H model in international intercorporate communication, as well as to outline the key elements and stages of implementing this approach in order to enhance the effectiveness of business interactions and build stable, trust-based relationships with clients. The study employed general scientific methods of cognition: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, generalization, systematization, and modeling. The findings indicate that the Human-to-Human (H2H) concept in international B2B marketing places the human factor at the center of communication between companies. The study concludes that adopting the H2H strategy enables the creation of authentic, emotionally driven, and trust-based relationships with clients, which in turn positively influences customer loyalty and brand image. The approach allows marketing communication to be tailored to the deep emotional and socio-psychological needs of the target audience, resulting in higher engagement, more relevant offerings, and stronger long-term partnerships. The research reveals that the effectiveness of H2H marketing depends on several key components, including humanity, personalized approach, focus on long-term relationships, emotional psychology, storytelling, and the seamless integration of artificial intelligence with human interaction. The study emphasizes that personalization and emotional resonance help craft an authentic interaction experience that allows companies to stand out in a competitive market. It highlights the importance of storytelling as a tool for delivering vivid and memorable messages, and notes that the use of AI technologies within the H2H context helps combine efficient service with a personalized approach. The article also outlines the step-by-step process of implementing an H2H strategy: from in-depth analysis of the target audience, further message personalization, creation of an authentic brand, application of storytelling tools, optimization of communication channels, to outcome evaluation and approach refinement. The practical value of the research lies in the potential application of its findings for developing effective H2H communication strategies within the international B2B environment.

**Keywords:** H2H marketing; B2B communication; personalization; emotional psychology; storytelling.

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<sup>1</sup> Anna Makhmudova, Business Development Manager, Saint-Gobain Corporation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, e-mail: [anna.makhmudova@yahoo.com](mailto:anna.makhmudova@yahoo.com)

## Вплив h2h на комунікативні процеси у міжнародному b2b

**Анотація.** Стаття присвячена аналізу впливу концепції Human-to-Human (H2H) на комунікативні процеси у сфері міжнародного B2B-маркетингу. Мета дослідження – з'ясування особливостей і переваг використання H2H-моделі у міжкорпоративній міжнародній комунікації, а також визначення ключових елементів та етапів впровадження цього підходу з метою підвищення ефективності бізнес-взаємодії та формування стабільних довірчих відносин із клієнтами. У ході наукового дослідження використовувалися загальнонаукові методи пізнання: аналіз, синтез, індукція, дедукція, узагальнення, систематизація, моделювання. Результати дослідження показують, що концепція Human-to-Human (H2H) у міжнародному B2B-маркетингу виводить на передній план людський фактор як основну рушійну силу у процесі комунікації між компаніями. Зроблено висновок, що застосування H2H-стратегії дозволяє формувати автентичні, емоційно насичені та довірчі взаємини з клієнтами, що, своєю чергою, позитивно впливає на рівень їхньої лояльності та імідж бренду. Показано, що цей підхід дозволяє адаптувати маркетингові комунікації до глибоких емоційних і соціально-психологічних запитів цільової аудиторії, що забезпечує високий рівень залученості, релевантність пропозицій та зміцнення довгострокових партнерств. У дослідженні виявлено, що ефективність H2H-маркетингу визначається низкою ключових складових, серед яких людяність, персоналізований підхід, акцент на довгострокові відносини, емоційна психологія, storytelling та гармонійна інтеграція штучного інтелекту з живим контактом. Зроблено акцент на тому, що персоналізація та емоційна складова допомагають створити автентичний досвід взаємодії, завдяки якому компанії можуть вирізнятися на конкурентному ринку. Розкрито важливість storytelling як інструменту створення яскравих і запам'ятовуваних меседжів, а також підкреслено, що застосування AI-технологій в H2H-контексті дозволяє поєднати ефективність обслуговування з індивідуальним підходом. Також у статті описано послідовні етапи реалізації H2H-стратегії: від глибокого аналізу цільової аудиторії, подальшої персоналізації повідомлень, формування автентичного бренду, застосування інструментів сторітелінгу, оптимізації каналів комунікації - до оцінки результатів і корекції підходів. Практичне значення дослідження полягає у можливості використання отриманих висновків для розробки ефективних H2H-комунікаційних стратегій у міжнародному B2B-середовищі.

**Ключові слова:** H2H-маркетинг, B2B-комунікація, персоналізація, емоційна психологія, storytelling.

### Introduction

Problem statement. H2H is a new marketing technology that has become an important component of the Marketing 5.0 concept, which is centered on human-centric marketing. Today, this approach is considered the next evolutionary stage after customer-centric marketing. The human-centered paradigm is becoming increasingly important in the context of the growing “roboticization” of the environment, shaped by artificial intelligence, which penetrates all areas, and especially business-to-business (B2B).

In this regard, brands must adapt and become more human. As the famous American marketer Philip Kotler notes: “Human-centered marketing is still the key to building brand appeal in the digital age, as brands with a human face are likely to be the best differentiated” [5].

H2H marketing is based on a highly integrated and collaborative approach. Accordingly, a brand cannot be considered in isolation but must be integrated into the H2H marketing subsystem. In Kotler's publication on brand management in B2B, this approach was defined as a “holistic brand approach”. This term is used to describe an approach to treating a patient in which the physical, mental and social factors affecting the patient are taken into account to a greater extent than a simple diagnosis of the disease.

In other words, H2H reveals the role of humanity in B2B interactions, considering how a personalized approach, long-term relationships, and emotional component influence the decision-making process in international trade. Special attention is paid to the psychological aspects of communications and the impact of brand reputation on customer loyalty.

Analysis of the latest research and publications. The issue of the impact of H2H (Human-to-Human) on communication processes in international B2B communication is sufficiently covered in foreign scientific literature. The main focus is on rethinking approaches to marketing and communication, where the focus is not just on the exchange of information between companies, but on building emotional, trusting relationships between the people behind the brands. The H2H concept is a response to the growing digitalization, which often eliminates the human factor in business communication. A significant contribution to the development of this topic was made by F. Kotler [5], who in his publication emphasizes that strategic brand and trust management is impossible without taking into account the human aspect. His idea is also developed by F. Kotler, W. Pörch and U. Sponholz [6], who in their monograph analyze in detail the genesis of H2H marketing and outline the main directions of its application. At the same time, A. Belova [1] emphasizes the importance of storytelling as a tool for brand personalization and emotional engagement of the audience. The modern business space, in particular the B2B sector, is being rethought through the prism of H2H also thanks to the publications of such authors as Koporcic N. and Törnroos J.-Å. [3], who consider the impact of H2H communication on the business networks, and M.Gouthier [7], who emphasizes the need to “humanize” e-commerce. In addition, Neuhaus T., Millemann J.-A. & Nijssen E [2] calls for abandoning traditional B2B and B2C schemes in favor of H2H, where the key is to understand the client as a person. The article by H. Mansoor [8] also fits into this paradigm, justifying the transition to H2H as a new form of customer experience management.

Despite the existence of a significant number of scientific works on the concept of Human-to-Human (H2H) in marketing activities, the issue of systematic analysis of the application of the H2H approach in the international B2B context remains insufficiently covered. In particular, the peculiarities of integrating humanity and personalization into inter-corporate communication processes, the role of emotional psychology in business decision-making, and the specific stages of building an effective H2H strategy are poorly understood.

To fill in these gaps, this study used a number of general scientific and special methods of scientific knowledge. In particular, the method of analysis was used to study the scientific works of leading domestic and foreign authors, which allowed to determine the essence of the H2H concept, its components and prospects for application in B2B marketing. The synthesis

method was used to summarize the information obtained and form a holistic view of the relationship between the components of the H2H approach. The comparative method was used to analyze the advantages and features of traditional and modern communication formats, which made it possible to determine the competitive advantages of H2H in comparison with classical approaches to communication. The author also used the grouping method to systematize and classify the components of the H2H approach according to their impact on decision-making in the international B2B context.

The purpose of the article is to identify the features and advantages of using the Human-to-Human (H2H) concept in international communication processes in the B2B segment, and also to identify the key components and stages of implementation of the H2H approach aimed at improving the efficiency of interaction between companies and building long-term trusting relationships with customers.

### **Results**

In today's business environment, B2B marketing requires new formats of interaction with consumers, who increasingly expect a personalized, valuable and “human” experience [9].

As Neuhaus, T., Millemann J.-A., & Nijssen E notes in his study, one of the factors that has increased the value of human interaction is the rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI), which has penetrated most areas of modern business in a short time. However, surveys show that most consumers do not want to interact exclusively with AI. According to a survey of approximately 2,200 consumers in the United States, 90% of respondents prefer to communicate with a human rather than a chatbot. The main reason for this attitude is the inability of AI to fully understand customer needs as a human can [2].

The concept of H2H marketing emerged as a result of a paradigm shift in modern marketing theory and practice aimed at rethinking the relationship between a brand and a consumer based on humanistic values, empathy, and co-creation of value. Professor Patrick Planning interprets H2H marketing as a return to the original essence of marketing activities - human interaction. The author emphasizes a paradigm shift in which the key element is not technology or mechanisms of influence, but the creation of value through interaction. Christian Koch focuses on H2H marketing as an ethical alternative to aggressive advertising practices in a saturated information environment. The author sees the value of the approach in focusing on “value interaction” instead of quantitative coverage. He emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary combination of classical and innovative approaches that create a balanced marketing model. At the same time, it can be critically noted that this approach idealizes the ethical component, without taking into account the complexities of balancing the market interests of companies with the deep needs of consumers.

Professor Adam-Alexander Manowicz views H2H marketing as an integrative model that combines design thinking, service-dominant logic, and digitalization. This approach can be considered one of the most holistic, as it conceptualizes H2H as a systemic paradigm that allows to rethink existing strategies through the prism of a humanistic approach [6].

The concept of Human-to-Human (H2H) is increasingly seen as a new paradigm that has the potential to replace traditional B2B and B2C approaches, because at the heart of any interaction are always people with emotions, needs, and a desire to be heard. According to Brian Kramer, author of the book “There is no more B2B or B2C: It's Human to Human”,

effective communication in modern marketing must recognize the human dimension behind every brand. Given the change in consumer behavior, companies implementing the H2H approach provide holistic and emotionally meaningful interaction at all stages of the customer journey - from purchase consideration to after-sales service. This approach contributes to the growth of loyalty, market differentiation, closer connection with the target audience, and adaptation of products to the real expectations of consumers, which together leads to increased business performance [4].

In view of this, traditional marketing tools are gradually giving way to flexible, digital and interactive practices. In his study, Van Rensburg I. identified 12 relevant tools for establishing communication processes in B2B, which we have systematized in Table 1.

**Table 1: Relevant B2B marketing tools**

№	Strategy.	Brief description	Expected effect
1	Webinars for a segmented audience	Online seminars tailored to the professional profile and needs of the target audience	Increased engagement, content relevance
2	Thought leadership on LinkedIn	Publications of expert content with storytelling elements from company leaders	Strengthening reputation and reach
3	Collaborations with experts	Partnerships with industry influencers to create joint content	Expanding the audience and increasing trust
4	Educational content (courses, reports)	Reputation initiatives in the form of guides, PDF reports, interactive infographics	Securing the status of an industry expert
5	Google retargeting	Campaigns with personalized creatives tailored to user behavior	Increase in repeat conversions
6	Nurturing campaigns	Automated email sequences with value-added content for each stage of the funnel	Speed up decision-making
7	Open access to content	Eliminate "content for registration" to increase reach and trust	Increased engagement and brand loyalty
8	Interactive tools	ROI calculators, quizzes, industry benchmarks with personalized feedback	High engagement and behavioral data collection
9	Independent demo products	The ability for customers to familiarize themselves with the product online	Lowering the barrier to entry, increasing interest

10	YouTube content	Video instructions, customer cases, explanations - in a visually appealing form	Increased organic reach and engagement
11	Giveaways and promotions	Social media or email marketing sweepstakes to increase awareness	Increase in leads and engagement
12	H2H approach	Focus on humanity, honesty, openness, and empathy in communication with customers	Deepening the connection between brand and customer

Note: systematized by the author based on the source [9].

More and more companies are recognizing that even in the B2B segment, decisions are made by people, not corporations, so communication should be personalized, open and meaningful. At the same time, future trends point to a deeper integration of advanced technologies: artificial intelligence (AI) for hyper-personalization, virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) for creating immersive experiences, as well as the emergence of new, yet-to-be-defined communication formats that will combine online and offline into a single seamless interaction [3].

H2H marketing is being actively integrated not only into international corporate, but also into Ukrainian business as an effective approach to building trust and emotional connection with customers. Companies such as Rozetka and Monobank successfully use informal, human communication, humor, and personalization in their interactions with the audience. Nova Poshta demonstrates social responsibility by supporting humanitarian and charitable initiatives, while Silpo builds emotional branding through creative storytelling and the visual atmosphere of its stores. At the same time, Kyivstar Business implements H2H through video stories of Ukrainian entrepreneurs, emphasizing the humanity and challenges of small business. These examples demonstrate a growing understanding that even in the B2B and tech sectors, emotions, trust, and authenticity remain key. The H2H approach allows Ukrainian companies to interact more effectively with customers, expand their loyal audience, and adapt to changes in consumer behavior [10].

According to Mansoor H.'s study, current B2B marketing is gradually transforming into H2H (human-to-human), where the value of interaction and authenticity are crucial factors of efficiency. Companies that combine expert content, digital tools, personalization and openness in communication have a significant competitive advantage. Success in B2B is now determined not only by the functionality of the product, but also by how humanly the brand builds its relationship with the consumer.

1. Deeper customer relationships - personalized communication helps build trust and loyalty.
2. A sense of engagement - customers feel heard, understood, and respected.
3. Responsiveness - businesses are better able to adapt to changes in customer needs.
4. Shared values - interaction is based on mutual understanding and emotional connection.
5. Improving the quality of decisions - customers are more confident in their choices due to deeper interaction.

6. Innovative collaboration - new opportunities for co-creation and partnerships are opened up.

7. Maximizing customer value through a better understanding of needs [8].

In the context of modern human-centered marketing, the H2H strategy is an effective model for forming deep and emotionally charged connections with target audiences. The main goal is to create a brand that is perceived as “human”, sincere and empathetic.

According to the studied literature and examples of H2H implementation in business, the main components of the Human-to-Human (H2H) approach in B2B communication are: humanity, personalized approach, long-term relationships, emotional psychology, storytelling, brand reputation, and the combination of AI and human contact. These components form the basis of modern intercorporate interaction, where the key success factor is the company's ability to create authentic, flexible, and trusting relationships with the client.

**Table 2 - H2H components and their impact on B2B decision-making**

№	H2H component	Influence on decision-making in the B2B context (in detail, using marketing terminology)
1	Humanity	Creates an emotional connection between the potential customer and the company, reducing resistance by demonstrating authenticity and transparency in communications. Humanity strengthens Customer Relationship Management (CRM), increasing Lifetime Value (LTV) and promoting lead conversion at the active sales stage
2	Personalized approach	It uses segmentation and customization of marketing messages, ensures targeting and accuracy in offers. This approach maximizes relevance, reduces marketing noise, increases the effectiveness of personalized campaigns, and optimizes Cost Per Acquisition (CPA)
3	Long-term relationships	It creates a strategic competitive advantage by creating a high level of customer loyalty. Helps to reduce the risks of churn rate, increases the Retention Rate, ensures stable sales performance and revenue predictability
4	Emotional psychology	Influences motivation to buy by activating emotional triggers such as a sense of security, confidence, and exclusivity. Takes into account the psychological patterns of customer behavior, strengthening the perception of the brand as a valuable partner (Value Perception), which is especially important in processes where decisions are made not only on the basis of rational arguments

5	Storytelling	Uses brand narrative techniques to strengthen the Unique Selling Proposition (USP) by creating vivid, memorable and compelling marketing messages. Storytelling helps customers easily understand complex decisions by creating mental images that activate emotional engagement and positively influence the Awareness and Consideration stages of the Customer Journey.
6	Combining AI and human contact	Provides the perfect synergy between Marketing Automation and personal interaction, creating an Integrated Customer Experience. Reduces Response Time, optimizes Customer Support processes while maintaining a high level of personal attention and empathy, which is especially important in the After-Sales Support phase

Note: systematized by the author

The introduction of the H2H approach in B2B communication radically changes the logic of decision-making in the corporate environment. This transformation allows to shorten negotiation cycles, minimize the risk of misunderstandings, increase loyalty and create a competitive advantage based not only on the product but also on the values, behavior and culture of the brand. This is especially important on a global scale, as international communication involves interaction with representatives of different cultures, and H2H, due to its versatility and human-centeredness, is an effective bridge in this multi-level interaction.

Implementing this technology is a sequential stage that requires a lot of time to study the audience and build effective aspects of interaction. Below is a generalized algorithm for building an effective H2H strategy in the form of Table 3.

**Table 3: Algorithm for building an H2H strategy**

№	Stage	Content of the stage
1	Target audience research	Deep understanding of consumer needs, motivations, fears, and expectations through surveys, in-store behavior analytics, and social media.
2	Personalization of communication	Use data to create personalized messages, product recommendations and content; introduce empathy and take into account individual customer needs.
3	Creating an authentic brand	Defining the character of the brand (e.g., trust, innovation, tradition) and consistently implementing this identity at all points of contact with the customer.
4	Storytelling through storytelling	Using real stories that create an emotional connection with the brand through blogs, videos, and social media.

5	Optimization of communication channels	Ensuring openness and accessibility through live chats, social media; demonstrating respect for the client through quick response and attentive attitude.
6	Measurement of effectiveness	Evaluating the effectiveness of the H2H strategy through indicators (churn rate, CLV, NPS); continuous improvement based on the data obtained.

Note: systematized by the author based on the source [7].

Implementing an H2H strategy requires a holistic approach that combines analytics, emotional intelligence, and consistent communication. Creating a “human” brand involves not only understanding customers, but also the ability to establish a genuine dialog with them based on trust, personalization, and emotional connection. Such a strategy allows not only to increase loyalty but also to lay the groundwork for sustainable brand growth in the digital age [7].

### Висновки

The concept of Human-to-Human (H2H) in international B2B marketing emphasizes the human factor as a central element of interaction between companies and their customers. The main benefits of the H2H approach are the formation of authentic, emotionally meaningful and trusting relationships that increase customer loyalty and improve brand reputation. H2H allows companies to tailor communications to the real emotional and psychological needs of the audience, ensuring deeper engagement, maximum relevance of offers and strengthening long-term partnerships.

The key components of H2H marketing that determine its effectiveness in international B2B are humanity, personalized approach, focus on building long-term relationships, emotional psychology, storytelling, and integration of artificial intelligence with human contact. Humanity and personalization create an authentic interaction experience that allows brands to stand out in a highly competitive environment. Emotional psychology and storytelling enhance the perception of a product or service by creating vivid and emotionally charged communications, and AI integration provides an effective balance between speed of service and personalized attention to customers.

The implementation of an H2H strategy is carried out in several successive stages, starting with in-depth research of the target audience, further personalization of communications, formation of an authentic brand, use of storytelling, optimization of communication channels, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the results.

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