

BRAND NAME IN THE SLOGAN! A SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE WAY TO CREATE A SLOGAN

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ABSTRACT

The slogan is one of the most important elements in the marketing communication toolbox. A good slogan can highlight the brand's most important advantage to consumers, position the brand, stimulate sales, and even provide a talking point, generating word of mouth. Yet despite the importance of the slogan, many brands have a meaningless motto that no one knows, or even if they do, they cannot associate it with the brand. In this paper, we will look at the techniques and methods that can help you create a good slogan. As it turns out, it is of paramount importance for a slogan to be memorable, and in this context, not only the meaning of the words but also the way they sound is important. In connection with this, we present five methods for creating an effective slogan: rhyme, alliteration, repetition, reversal and double-entendre. But what kind of slogan should you avoid at all costs? Well, avoid the "more than" formula! And what is the easiest way to ensure that consumers not only remember the slogan, but also identify it with the brand? Put the brand name in the slogan!

Keywords: *branding, marketing, positioning, slogan, battle cry, rhyme, alliteration, repetition*

1. INTRODUCTION

The slogan is one of the most important elements in the marketing communication toolbox. A good slogan can highlight the brand's most important advantage to consumers, position the brand, stimulate sales, and even provide a talking point, generating word of mouth. Yet despite the importance of the slogan, many brands have a meaningless motto that no one knows, or even if they do, they cannot associate it with the brand. In this paper, we will look at the techniques and methods that can help you create a good slogan. As it turns out, it is of paramount importance for a slogan to be memorable, and in this context, not only the meaning of the words but also the way they sound is important. In connection with this, we present five methods for creating an effective slogan: rhyme, alliteration, repetition, reversal and double-entendre. But what kind of slogan should you avoid at all costs? Well, avoid the "more than" formula! And what is the easiest way to ensure that consumers not only remember the slogan, but also identify it with the brand? Put the brand name in the slogan!

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It may seem somewhat simplistic, but a brand has three main identity elements: the brand name, the logo and the slogan (Galí, Camprubí, Donaire 2017). Each of these is of paramount importance and each has a slightly different function. The slogan is to convey the main message, if you like, the essence of the brand in a few words. "Battle cry". First of all, it is good to remind ourselves that this is the original meaning of the word slogan. That is, when it is heard, soldiers give their lives and blood for a common cause. When we see (and hear) scenes from the film "Braveheart", we are not far wrong. Of course, for the Celts and Gauls, the word was different: 'sluaghghairm' first entered the English language as 'slughorn', then 'sluggorne', and became a 'slogan' after many centuries (Healey 2009, Ries 2015). However, what is still true of its original meaning is that it is good if a slogan can get people lined up and enthusiastic about a brand, whether they are customers or employees. Although the word "battle cry" is less used today, the world's most famous marketing textbook, Kotler's Marketing Management, also states that the slogan is very important in creating brand equity.

It says that the slogan's "function is to provide the consumer with a useful handle or clue to understand what lies behind the brand and what makes it special". (Kotler - Keller 2006, 378-379). Other authors mention the same point, emphasising that the slogan is a kind of hook that conveys the message and uniqueness of the brand (Kohli – Leuthesser – Suri 2007). While the replacement of a brand name or a logo is difficult and usually slow, there is no such barrier in the case of a slogan. Thus, the slogan is the most dynamic and flexible part of the brand, which can create a bridge between the brand's heritage and its evolving, modern image (Kohli - Leuthesser - Suri 2007, 416). It is also worth quoting Ildikó Sárközy (2009), who argues that a slogan is a sentence that contains the brand's textual message. In the case of a good slogan, the unique product promise is articulated in the brand message. The slogan is a mandatory part of brand communication – serving as its foundation and peak at the same time. This has been confirmed by research by Kovács (2019, 20-21), who writes that the impact of marketing communication can be detected in associations, and that in most cases a well-defined element of the marketing communication mix – such as an image or a slogan – is responsible for these associations. As he explains, "Associations can be positive or negative for the brand, or they can be incorrect, for example, if one brand is associated with another brand's slogan" (Kovács 2019, 29.). Furthermore, according to Rosengren and Dahlén (2006), the slogan can also play an important role in building a brand's prestige. While the logo is a less human, visual, graphic element that captures people (rather than making them think), the slogan is a specifically human interaction, since it mostly uses common language to communicate its values, the authors argue. The importance of the slogan or motto is therefore undeniable. However, the question of what makes a slogan really good is not easy to answer. There are many approaches in the literature on what makes a slogan successful and effective. In his book "The power of brand names" (2013), Papp-Váry summarised these aspects as follows:

- a good slogan "captures" the positioning of the brand;
- it has a clear message, conveys the product/brand "story";
- it is attractive, it has the "consumer, customer" advantage;
- it has a positive connotation (or at least it is not negative);
- it inspires us to buy it or learn more about it;
- it is relatively short (5 words or less);
- it is distinctive: unique, original, different from competitors;
- it is long-lasting, sustainable, there is no need to replace it;
- it is easy to remember and repeat;
- it works well with the logo;
- it is catchy;
- it appeals to customers – and staff as well.

3. FAMILIAR OR UNKNOWN

Checklists like the above can be found at almost every marketing company, branding consultant or advertising agency. Yet very few brands have a slogan that consumers know – or even if they do know the slogan, they may not be able to associate the brand name with it. And the most surprising thing is that this is true even for large international companies that can work with the most professional marketers in the world with huge communication budgets. Let us give it a try! What is Nike's slogan? Is that an easy question? Yes, their slogan is "Just do it". What does it mean? Very briefly, it means that you should not make excuses, just put on your running shoes and run. (Or play any other sport.) Okay, now for the next question. What is Adidas' slogan? It is not so easy, is it? In the world, the two brands are essentially neck and neck with similar sales, both spending a lot on advertising. By the way, their slogan is "Adidas is All In", and before that it was "Impossible is nothing".

It should be noted that neither of these slogans is bad, in fact. After all, “All in” also means that it is worth giving your all when you play sport. Yet fewer people know these slogans than Nike’s slogan. True, the comparison is unfair in the sense that according to Advertising Age, “Just do it” is the second best slogan of the 20th century. Which comes first will be revealed at the end of the study. But we can also look at other industries. What is the current slogan for Coca-Cola? This one might even be recalled: ‘Open happiness’. And what is Pepsi’s? Probably not so memorable: “That’s what I like”. Or think about it: how many car brand slogans can you say? And they are among the biggest advertisers in the world! And you as a reader are not even the average person, but a professional interested in marketing, in the world of brands. But let us face it, even advertising agencies are not good at slogans. How many agency slogans do we know? If they cannot create a slogan that their clients and potential clients know, it is no coincidence that so many of their slogans for product and service brands fail. One reason for this may be that marketing and business speak is full of abstract words. In meetings, we hear terms such as consumer centricity, quality service, modern technology, management excellence, customer experience, or even innovative products. (Adams 2010, Trout – Rivkin 2009) In fact, while the innovation is indeed useful, or even essential in business and marketing, the word innovation is almost useless in marketing communication. It is concrete words that people know what to do with – something that they see in their minds, something that appears in front of them.

4. FIVE TECHNIQUES FOR CREATING SLOGANS

This prompted Laura Ries, daughter of Al Ries, author of *Positioning*, and one of the leaders of their joint consultancy company, to summarize what it takes to create a successful slogan. According to her book *Battlecry* (2015), the main goal is to make the slogan memorable and of course identifiable with the brand – the key to which, if the slogan is positioning, is to include a unique selling proposition, USP. (It is no coincidence that she is the daughter of the author of *Positioning*.) Of course, this in itself is nothing new for a marketer. What is new is that, as she points out in the book, the way words sound is also important besides their meaning. In fact, the latter is more important. Just think of how much more likely it is that people will talk about it afterwards, resulting in word-of-mouth advertising. According to Laura Ries, there are five methods, or verbal techniques, for creating such slogans: rhyme, alliteration, repetition, reversal and double-entendre (Ries 2015). These are summarised below.

4.1. Rhyme

Nowadays, this may be the most outdated method, considered by many advertisers and agencies to be downright awkward. But these slogans cannot be all bad if you remember them decades later. How much more memorable, for example, is it for Pepsi to replace “That’s what I like” with “Pepsi-Cola hits the spot. Twelve full ounces, that’s a lot. Twice as much for a nickel too. Pepsi-Cola is the drink for you.” The popularity of Timex watches was also boosted by the slogan: “It takes a licking and keeps on ticking.” – the watch was shown on people doing hard physical work or extreme sports. Or there is the slogan of the Paul Masson wine brand: “We will sell no wine before its time”. Yahoo’s legendary slogan also included a rhyme: “Do you... Yahoo!?”

4.2. Alliteration

Alliteration is not only common in slogans, but also in brand names, whether there are two words or syllables. Coca-Cola or Dunkin’ Donuts are examples of the former, while PayPal or Blackberry are examples of the latter. But it is also used in the titles of TV shows, such as *Big Brother*. It is important to note that, in Laura Ries’ interpretation (2015), alliteration does not necessarily mean that the two words are consecutive, but that the initial letter of the brand name

is used somewhere in another word. Staying in the world of reality television, examples include the title *Keeping up with the Kardashians*. Back to the topic of alliterations and slogans: in the case of the original English version of the M&M's slogan, there is an alliteration, "Melts in your mouth, not in your hands." Its words melt and mouth also alliterate with the brand name M&M's. The phrase is also one of the best positioning slogans, as it was a real innovation at the time to have a hard layer of sugar surrounding the chocolate and not melting. Although it has not been the brand slogan for a long, long time, many consumers still associate the product with it. Or we could mention a similar example from another industry, Esso petrol stations, referring to their mascot animal, the tiger: 'Put a tiger in your tank'. Alliteration is an easy choice when creating a slogan in the sense that – as Laura Ries writes (2015) – you only need to open a dictionary at the letter that begins your brand name.

4.3. Repetition

"To be or not to be, that is the question." William Shakespeare and perhaps the most famous lines in world literature use repetition. But the question could also be asked in the form "To be or not?" But the repetition reinforces the text. The US Army could have used "Be all you can", but "Be all you can be" is much stronger and more memorable. We could also use the Papa John's slogan as an example: "Better ingredients. Better Pizza." Or there is the case of Walmart: "Always low prices. Always." where the second 'always' confirms our choice. Max Factor's example is not just a slogan, but an excellent case of positioning: "The Make Up of Make Up Artists" – it is hard to think of a better way to describe the unbeatable quality. The slogan of Dollar Shave Club is also particularly witty: "Shave Time. Shave Money." KitKat chocolate's popularity is greatly enhanced by its slogan and the advertising that demonstrates it: "Have a break. Have a KitKat." i.e. take a break and eat a KitKat. Energizer used a drumming bunny to demonstrate how durable its batteries are, and products using them just go on and on and on: "It Keeps Going, and Going, and Going..." Last, but not least: perhaps the most famous repetition can be found in an international city slogan. "What happens here, stays here", says the slogan of Las Vegas, which could only be better if the brand name, that is, the city name, was included. Of course, it is no coincidence that people automatically use the phrase "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas."

4.4. Reversal

Few speeches by politicians are remembered decades later, but US President John F. Kennedy's speech is, saying "Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country". It is a classic reversal, offering a reversed perspective. A similarly famous saying in the business world is Peter F. Drucker's thought "Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." (Drucker 2003) But the name of the world's most famous motorcycle club, Hells Angels is also a reversal. It was an example of repetition, but perhaps even more of a reversal, when Holiday Inn chose the slogan "The best surprise is no surprise", referring to the consistently high quality and service found in Holiday Inn hotels, telling it in a much more creative way. The case of the Residence Inn is also similar – they said that what you can rent is not a room, but a residence: "It's not a room, it's a residence." The Volkswagen Beetle campaign, voted by Advertising Age as the best advertising campaign of the 20th century, also used a reversal. Just when everyone in America seemed to be looking for a big car, VW came out with the "Think small" ad. And the headlines unfurled the slogan: "Live below your means", said one ad. "And if you run out of gas, it's easy to push," demonstrated another. They also provided a very particular perspective on why it makes sense to choose a small car: "It makes your house look bigger" (Imseng, 2018). And we could list several further examples of successful reversals. "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken." – said owner Frank Perdue in his Perdue Farms commercials.

A similar solution was used by Secret deodorant when it advertised using the slogan “Strong enough for a man, but made for a woman”. 7-UP created one of the most famous positioning examples to date when it launched in the market with the slogan “The Uncola”. Finally, there is the case of the jam producer Smucker’s. Here the name sounds rather odd, different from the word ‘suckers’ only by one letter. This situation was also reversed by a slogan: “With a name like Smucker’s it has to be good”.

4.5. Double-entendre

There is a famous political example of the last category, namely when the future Iron Lady Margaret Thatcher campaigned for the Conservative Party against the Labour Party. The message was ‘Labour isn’t working’, which implied not only that the Labour Party and the government was not working well, but also that unemployment was rising. The latter was demonstrated by the queue for unemployment benefit displayed on the poster. Demonstration is important in other cases too. Morton salt, known to many for its packaging, where a little girl with an umbrella over her head pours salt in the rain, used the slogan “When it rains, it pours.” for decades. In doing so, the company reinforced both visually and verbally that this salt does not stick in water, thanks to the added magnesium carbonate, a huge innovation a hundred years ago. Merryll Lynch’s slogan is also playing with the meaning of the words, referring to the stock market and the bull market: “Merryll Lynch is bullish on America.” Examples also include the John Deere tractor and its slogan “Nothing runs like a Deere.”, the ambiguity of which is reinforced by the deer in the logo. Now, if it is true that it is much easier to get into people’s heads with slogans created in the five ways described above, one would think that advertisers and their agencies would be wise enough to use these solutions. However, only a very few of them do that. A survey of 266 advertising slogans found that only 19 of them fell into any of the five categories above. And even of those 19, several of them were really meaningless, concluded Laura Ries (2015).

5. THE WORST CHOICE OF SLOGAN: “MORE THAN ...”

Considering that according to Laura Ries, many advertising slogans are meaningless, it is worth looking at the phrase that is the worst of all options, although it is still used by many. This is none other than “More than ...” – followed by the name of the product/service category. “More than” may seem like a good idea, as it suggests that the brand stands out in the category because it is doing something else. But that is exactly the problem. What is the brand actually doing then? In his book “Brand a lelke mindennek” (“It is all about brands”) (2021, p. 94), Róbert Mészáros sums it up with irony: “‘More than...’ Wow, that is the worst choice! I want to make you believe that I am more than something, but what I am actually is obscure – so I go on using the same expression. More than insurance, more than business, more than slogan, more than bullshit. More than everything, more than embarrassing. More than branding... erm, you would not buy anything from us this way, would you?! :)” A well-known Hungarian professional forum of online advertising, Addict Blog, dedicated a special post to this topic in 2013, entitled “More than just an embarrassing advertising slogan”. It argues against ‘More than ...’ “is the most mannered, yet the most meaningless variation, which seems to say something, to send a message, while having the opposite effect and immediately becoming an object of ridicule.”

6. THE BEST CHOICE OF SLOGAN: BRAND NAME IN THE SLOGAN!

Now we know what the worst choice of slogan is, in the words of Róbert Mészáros (2021). But which one is the best? How can a slogan become immediately associated with a brand? Well, there is a method of common-sense (Papp-Váry 2009): simply include the brand name in the slogan. The author of this article already wrote about this topic quite extensively in 2013 in his book „The power of brand names”.

Since then, more recent examples have only confirmed that you cannot make a big mistake if you include the brand name in the slogan. In fact, you can usually achieve your aims. Just have a look at a few examples! What is Gösser's slogan? Yes, „Gut, Besser, Gösser”! (And how much better it sounds than the original: Gut, Besser, Paulaner). What is the slogan for Calgon? “Washing machines live longer with Calgon” What is the slogan of Red Bull? “Red Bull gives you wings.”) It is no coincidence that David Ogilvy wrote in his book *Ogilvy on Advertising* (2001) that, if possible, the brand name should be included in the headline of the advertisement. Paul Arden (2003), former creative director of the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, has suggested the same. Although they wrote this about headlines, their findings are equally, and perhaps even more, valid for slogans. Pike (2004) points out that the inclusion of the brand name in a slogan clearly links the values and associations to be communicated to the brand, and creates a unique, unmistakable slogan. In fact, if a brand is not yet known, it can be particularly important to integrate the name into the slogan, as this can introduce both the brand name and the brand message to the public (Ortega – Mora – Rauld, 2006). But let us look at examples from the world of brands! “Today, Tomorrow, Toyota” says Toyota’s slogan, which is also a triple alliteration. “Have you ever seen a Corolla broken down?”, they said of one of their models. “The Coke Side of Life” was Coca-Cola’s slogan a few years ago. “You’ve been Tangoed” – the advertisements of the Tango juice (mainly orange juice) brand featured a big orange man who regularly surprised unsuspecting people. ‘A Guinness a day is good for you’, and later ‘A Guinness is good for you’ – if the slogan says it is good for you, then it is certainly worth drinking. (Especially as Guinness, like Coca-Cola, was originally a medicine.) “Australians Wouldn’t Give a XXXX For Anything Else”, says the slogan of the Australian XXXX beer, playing on the phrase “not give a f...”. “Citi never sleeps”, says Citibank’s slogan, a reference to the hard work and dedication of the company. It also evokes a well-known saying: ‘The City That Never Sleeps’ is one of New York’s nicknames, and the company’s headquarters are located here. “Have you met life today?” is how Metlife Insurance hid its brand name in the question. “No FT, No comment” – the slogan of the Financial Times financial newspaper also uses a witty solution. “Come to Marlboro Country” – we saw the cowboy enjoying freedom on cigarette ads for decades. It was the longest running advertising campaign of all time, and the slogan played a big part in that. “Winston tastes good ... like a cigarette should”, sang Fred and Barney, two Stone Age pros, when tobacco product placement was still allowed in cartoons. “Every kiss begins with Kay” was not a bad choice for a jewellery brand. “America Runs on Bulova” – the humble phrase from the Bulova watch brand also suggested that they were behind the world’s first TV ad, which of course featured a watch. “Why Slow-Mow When You Can Flymo” – the Flymo mower brand wittily alluded to the fact that it cuts lawns faster than other brands. “Fly the friendly skies of United” – if it did not include the term „of United”, it would be much harder to identify the airline. “There’s Hertz and not exactly.” – i.e. there is Hertz car rental and there are those that are not exactly like them. Of course, the slogan was backed up by the fact that for quite some time Hertz was the market leader. “Beanz Meanz Heinz” – that is, Heinz means beans, or more precisely canned beans. True, since then it has also meant ketchup and many other things. “The Few. The Proud. The Marines.” is the most famous motto of the U.S. Marine Corps. „Intel Inside” is not only an excellent alliteration, but it has also taught consumers to know and appreciate the internal components of their computers and laptops that they essentially never encounter physically. The examples go on and on. “It’s not TV, it’s HBO.” displays perfect positioning against the rest of the industry, also implying that there are no commercials here, as with a classic television channel. Another ad says, pointing to a nice sweater: „New? No, washed in Perwoll.” As for pets, the US brand Meow Mix showed cats meowing in the ad, followed by the tagline, pointing out that the Meow Mix brand is what cats ask for by name: “Tastes So Good, Cats Ask For It By Name.”

“The best part of waking up is Folgers in your cup,” said the Folgers coffee ad, beating its competitors by a good margin. (Smart readers will also spot the rhyme in the slogan.) “You work hard, you need Right Guard” recommends Right Guard deodorant for those who work hard. “If it’s Madewell, it’s well made” is a great message for women's clothing. “Bubble Yum. Number yum in bubble gum.” referred to being the first among inflatable bubble gums, spelled as “number yum” instead of “number one”. “Marmite – My Mate” was a great choice for a food product with a very special flavour. “Maybe she’s born with it. Maybe it’s Maybelline.” – said the excellent slogan of Maybelline cosmetics, meaning that either she was naturally beautiful to begin with, or Maybelline made her naturally beautiful and thus confident. “Do you...Yahoo!?” – i.e. “Do you use Yahoo search?” – and the rhyme made it sound even more witty. “Happiness is a cigar called Hamlet.” suggested happiness was based on a Hamlet cigar. “Don’t just book it. Thomas Cook it.” – i.e. do not just book the trip, use the Thomas Cook travel agency. “Life is Good” – this one is special in that the full brand name does not appear directly, it only features the initials, LG. However, when you switch on your LG branded phone, you see the slogan as well. Finally, let us examine three more interesting examples. “There are some things money can’t buy. For everything else, there’s MasterCard.” – although it is a rather long slogan, it has been successfully introduced to consumers’ minds by the corresponding commercials, which are always based on the same pattern (product X and its price, product Y and its price, product Z and its price, followed by something that is not a product – priceless). There was even an advertising competition by them (Newman 2008): several films were shot without text, so applicants had to name the 3 products and 1 sentiment. But people also started to create such films for their own entertainment, viral films if you like – before the advent of social media! In fact, the Mastercard campaign started in 1997 and is now a quarter of a century old. Of course, along with the long slogan, we should not forget the word “Priceless” at the end, which is a perfect example of a tagline attached to a slogan. “Nobody was ever fired for buying from IBM” was IBM’s slogan at one time. True, it never existed in any official form, and it was never included in any of their advertising. But their salesmen spread the slogan by word of mouth, or persuaded customers using it – we could say they used a kind of guerrilla marketing. And the argument was good enough to make purchasing professionals responsible for IT investments choose IBM. Last but not least, “Nothing sucks like an Electrolux”. The interesting thing about this slogan is that, of in the US it can also be interpreted as “Nothing fails as much as an Electrolux”. There was a belief that an Electrolux translator had made a blunder, which was not noticed by anyone else in the company until the posters were out. Recently, however, a former Electrolux marketer has come forward to claim that the slogan was used deliberately to provoke the audience and make the advertisement memorable. Of course, it is possible that the person was only trying to defend their reputation in hindsight.

7. CONCLUSION: FOREVER AND EVER

At the end of this article, let us return to an earlier question. If we are so unfamiliar with the slogans of even the largest multinational companies, whose products we consume every day and whose advertisements we regularly see, do slogans have any importance at all in the case of small companies? Do we need to spend any time on this, or can we just use the services of one of online slogan generators like Slogangenerator.org, Slogangenerator.co, Procato, Oberlo, Shopify, or Getsocio? Well, if we assume that a small or start-up company has a much smaller marketing communication budget, then strong positioning and a slogan that communicates this is all the more important. If a company cannot create a memorable slogan, it will find it extremely difficult to build a brand. And if it cannot build a strong brand, it will find it extremely difficult to make money. Of course, a good product is important. You cannot win in the market with a bad product and a good slogan. But you can lose with a good product and a bad slogan, as Laura Ries points out (2015).

And if consumers remember nothing of our advertising but the brand name and the slogan, we may already be ahead of many of our competitors. Moreover, if we choose a good slogan, we can use it for years or even decades. You may recall from the previous paragraphs that Advertising Age named Nike's "Just do it" as the second best slogan of the 20th century. But what advertisement came first? Well, the slogan of jewellery manufacturer De Beers: "A Diamond is Forever". The ambiguity of the slogan captures both the high quality and durability of the product and includes what customers really want: a relationship, love or marriage that lasts forever. In fact, a good slogan should also be one that lasts forever. What the chapter has not mentioned is that it is always better to choose a slogan and use it consistently for years or even decades, than to invent a new slogan every year, however brilliant it may be. Consistency always pays off in the world of marketing.

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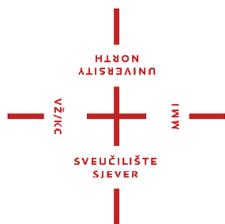
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ISSN 1849-7535



Plitvice Lakes, 17-18 June, 2022

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Title ■ Economic and Social Development (Book of Proceedings), 84th International Scientific Conference on Economic and Social Development

Editors ■ Vlatka Ruzic, Branislav Sutic, Dean Uckar

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Publisher ■ **Design** ■ **Print** ■ Varazdin Development and Entrepreneurship Agency, Varazdin, Croatia / University North, Koprivnica, Croatia / Polytechnic "Nikola Tesla" in Gospić, Gospić, Croatia / Faculty of Management University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland / Faculty of Law, Economics and Social Sciences Sale - Mohammed V University in Rabat, Morocco / Polytechnic of Medimurje in Cakovec, Cakovec, Croatia

Printing ■ Online Edition

ISSN 1849-7535

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