

The Role Of Marketing Communication In Marketing Of Consumers Products

¹**Igwe, Kalu Chikeziri**
Igwekaluchikeziri@Gmail.Com

&

²**Ezeobi Amarachukwu Judith**
Judy4judy@Gmail.Com

^{1,2}**Department Of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Oko, Anambra State**

Abstract

Marketing communications is an essential factor in the process of creating a trust among the customers for an organisation. It is one of the most important factors in an organisation's success on the market. The study reviewed theories and models relating to marketing communication mix which explain and elaborate various ways in which communication strategies are used to pass information to potential and current customers in the market and these theories include the hierarchy of needs theory, AIDA model, Porter's five forces model, Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow's Theory) and Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow's Theory). The roles of marketing communications are sales marketing communication which involves communicating with your customers so as to keeps them apprised of new happenings in your business and fulfills the objective of promoting your products and services. This can include new product launches, sales, expansion or introduction of new offerings, providing information and education to customers, retention of existing customers, referrals from existing customers, building brand awareness among others. In conclusion, Marketers that utilize marketing communication wisely will successfully change consumer behavior and establish brand loyalty thus develop long term trust within their customer

Keynotes: Marketing communication, Communication theory, Education, Consumers, Communication mix

Introduction

Marketing communication functions within a marketing framework. Marketing communications involve enhancing or achieving awareness, better understanding,

shared beliefs and meaning, and positive associations, attitudes and predispositions in favour of the product, service or organisation that is being marketed. Traditionally known as the promotional

element of the four Ps of marketing (product, place, price, and promotion), the primary goal of marketing communication is to reach a defined audience to affect its behavior by informing, persuading, and reminding. Marketing communication acquires new customers for brands by building awareness and encouraging trial. Marketing communication also maintains a brand's current customer base by reinforcing their purchase behavior by providing additional information about the brand's benefits. A secondary goal of marketing communication is building and reinforcing relationships with customers, prospects, retailers, and other important stakeholders.

Elements of Marketing Communication

Successful marketing communication relies on a combination of options called the promotional mix. These options include advertising, sales promotion, public

relations, direct marketing, and personal selling.



Figure 1: Elements of Marketing Communication

The components of the marketing communication mix are discussed below and put into perspective for successful marketing to today's consumers by today's business.

a. Advertising

This is the mass media method of marketing communication and provides exposure to the largest, most geographically dispersed audience at the lowest cost per head. That being said, advertising costs can add up quickly with mediums like television, radio and even online advertising which can be

prohibitively expensive for many businesses.

Other traditional forms of paid advertising include newspapers and magazines, the Yellow Pages, billboards, signs and posters.

As well, advertising on buses, benches, gas pumps and even public restrooms is in vogue today.

Basically, any medium which provides an opportunity to target “eyes and/or ears” can be a venue for advertising and you can see examples of successful promotion in the most unlikely places.

b. Direct Marketing:

This marketing communication competency enables companies to reach out directly to consumers without intermediary channels such as those required for advertising. This component of the marketing communication process includes direct mail, catalogs, coupons and inserts, telemarketing, online marketing and television infomercials. Sales and marketing are fundamental to the

survival of any business and both involve creating customers for the business value you have created. The former targets one person or entity whereas the latter targets many.

Both engage, inform and persuade through a variety of communicational tools. Aligning both will increase your success regardless of conditions. Successful sales and successful marketing both begin with an attitude and that attitude is customers first.

c. Public Relations:

This refers to how you handle your relationships and the flow of information with your various “publics” or the people who have a stake in or are affected by your business. Public relations is one of the most recent modes of marketing communication. Nwosu (2006) defined public relations as “that management function that is aimed at making friends for an organisation, retaining those friends and building internal and external goodwill on the reasonable

assumption that these are strongly needed for an organisation to remain in whatever business it is engaged in, as well as grow and prosper in it". Public relations are two-way communication relationship between a company and its publics among which are its customers. It is executed for the common good of both the company and the publics. In this way the company builds trust and friendship with its customers. It is perceived as responsible and commands a lot of respect. The importance of public relations was captured by Belch and Belch (2001) when they said that "at the corporate level, various aspects of a firm's business practices and philosophies, such as its mission, hiring practices, philanthropies, corporate culture and ways of responding to inquiries all have dimensions that communicate with customers and other stakeholders and affect relationships. This includes the general public, consumers, shareholders, employees, partners,

competitors and the government. Public relation becomes a more and more crucial element of the marketing communication mix as a business or organization grows larger. That being said, it is still a vital component of the marketing communication process to think about for smaller businesses as well. Public relations tools include press and media releases, lobbying, charitable and public events, advertorials, financial reports, promotional collateral, facility tours, sponsorships, interviews and any other method for the promotion of a positive image to people.

d. Personal Selling

Personal selling was defined by Onah and Thomas (2004) as "the direct face-to-face contact between buyer and seller, for example oral presentation of goods and services to customers by sales representatives." Belch and Belch (2001) also defined personal selling as "a form of

person to person communication in which a seller attempts to assist and/or persuade prospective buyers to purchase the company's products or services or to act on an idea." It is a marketing communication tool that uses sales people to reach out to the customers. These sales people interact with the customers and make them aware of the product or service and how they can obtain it and what they can benefit from the product. Kotler & Armstrong (2010) hold that "this approach assumes that customers have latent needs that constitute opportunities and that they will be loyal to sales reps who can analyse their needs and who have their long term interest at heart"

e. Sales Promotion

What better way to understand sales promotion than this offered by (Kotler & Keller, 2012) that "whereas advertising offers a reason to buy, sales promotion offers an incentive to buy." Sales promotion works by offering incentives to buyers and

sellers for buying the product or service and use it as a method of stimulating demand and sales. Ali (2002) added to this by saying that "Incentive can help encourage sales of your product. An incentive is an inducement which you can use to: persuade people to buy from you rather than a competitor... Get people to respond... Get people to buy more of your product." The importance of sales promotion was also captured by Oduwale (2001) who wrote that "Apart from product repackaging and new product introduction, another strategy that is commonly used by most manufacturers 77 towards the end of the year to entice customers and consumers is sales promotion and bonanzas." Sales promotion also uses the mass media like radio, television, newspapers, magazines, billboards, point-of-sale materials to deliver marketing communication messages to the customers

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

There are a number of theories and models relating to marketing communication mix which explain and elaborate various ways in which communication strategies are used to pass information to potential and current customers in the market. The study reviewed the hierarchy of needs theory, AIDA model, Porter's five forces model, Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow's Theory) and Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow's Theory).

- **The Response Hierarchy Theory**

The Hierarchy of effects theory was advanced by Lavidge and Steiner (1961), this marketing communication theory proposes six steps from broadcasting a product advertisement to product acquisition. The advertiser persuades the consumer to go throughout the six steps and procure the product. The six steps are Awareness, Knowledge, Liking, Preference, Conviction and final Purchase. As stated by

Lavidge and Steiner (1961), it is a hierarchy of effects because the quantity of customers decrease from one phase to another which implies that business corporations should struggle to attain a lot of customers to the final phase of buying through innovative marketing communication messages that transmit distinctive value or service intentions to the target audience. The response hierarchy model presumes that the customer goes through three stages; cognitive, affective and behavioural stages. First the learn-feel-do progression is appropriate when audience has high involvement – high differentiation product category example a house or furniture. Secondly do-feel-learn sequence is appropriate when an audience has high involvement there is no differentiation product category example airline tickets and the third is learn-do-feel sequence once an audience has low involvement there is little differentiation example sugar. Hence by

deciding on the right sequence, the marketer can do a superior job of planning marketing communication.

- **Porter's Five (5) Forces Model**

Porter's five forces theory was developed for assessing attractiveness of firms which will eventually determine the competitiveness of the firms. The theory is composed of five forces that shape the industry competition analysis. The forces are; bargaining power of customers, bargaining power of suppliers, threat of new entrants, industry rivalry and threat of substitutes (Kotler & Keller, 2012). The moderating variable of the study has considered the aspect of macro environmental factors like industry competition, the market (customers), suppliers/distributors. Bargaining power of suppliers establishes when suppliers in an industry have influence over a company by having power over prices of raw materials, a

variety of services and devices necessary to the company for manufacturing procedure (Johnson et al., 2011). In this specific case, due to the extent at which soft drink companies functions the bargaining power of the suppliers is regarded to be low (Industrial report, 2014). This is due to the buying power of soft drink companies and the capacity of the organization to capitalize on economies of scale. Bargaining power of customers is the capability of customers and how they can negotiate in terms of attaining cheaper manufactured goods in a different place. This puts the bargaining power of consumers as very high. Threat of new entrants proposes the attractiveness of the industry and the capacity of beginners to function in the industry (Dibb & Simkin, 2013). Due to the present level of infiltration in the retail market place it is not easy for new comers to enter this space; however importation of soft drink products from other countries have increased over the past

few years and the products are sold at slightly lower prices than the locally produced products. Hence the threat of new entrants is measured as very high.

- **Hierarchy of effect models**

One of the prime theories in the marketing communication framework is hierarchy of effect model which logically explains the sequential tasks of marketing message influence. On other words, it affects the consumers' awareness to purchase action which is assumed that the relative step would ideally push through to next process. First process is cognitive part which means consumers have received the message and like to awareness. Second process is affective part that shows the attitude and reaction to the promotion messages have been generate in the step. The final process is behaviour part which is the actual purchase to the promoted brand (De Pelsmacker et al, 2004). According to these

three main processes, many different models have been created and AIDA is one of the models and often to be referred.

- **AIDA Model**

AIDA is a communication model applied by firms to facilitate them to sell their products and services. The AIDA model was an early effort to explain how advertising's potential audience might go through a number of steps, with attention being the first and most important one Fortenberry & McGoldrick, 2020). It was developed by Elias St. Elmo Lewis in 1925 who was an advertising and sales pioneer and believed if an advertisement contained the four qualities, then it is effective. Palmer (2005) hypothesizes that the message is offered according to an easy model which is: encourage the attention of your prospect; interest your prospect in the product; prompt your prospect to desire the product, and entail action from the prospect. AIDA

concept implies that getting attention is marketing communication first task. , the AIDA model is a concept that explains how a promotion element can be used by marketers to influence a consumer's perception and attitude towards a product or service. Several elements of marketing communication mix can be integrated with the model to measure how effective each strategy is at every stage of the model. The model has four stages; attention, interest, desire and action

- **Herzberg's Theory**

The Herzberg's theory was focused on what motivates customers to buy a product. According to Kotler and Keller (2013) "Fredrick Herzberg developed a two factor theory that distinguishes dissatisfiers (factors that cause dissatisfaction) and satisfiers (factor that cause satisfaction). The absence of dissatisfiers is not enough; satisfiers must be present to motivate a

purchase". This theory shows that in trying to satisfy a customer it is not enough to concentrate effort in avoiding what the customer does not like but that the company should carry out activities aimed at generating what the customer likes to be able to please and satisfy him.

- **Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow's Theory)**

This hierarchy of needs theory was developed by Abraham Maslow hence it is also known as Maslow's theory. By this theory Maslow tried to explain the motivation of people by categorizing human needs according to their motivational importance. Kotler and Keller (2013) explained this theory thus "human needs are arranged in a hierarchy, from the most pressing to the least pressing in order of importance. They are physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self actualisation needs. People will try to

satisfy their most important needs first.” This theory shows that customer satisfaction depends on the category of the customer’s need. That a customer will first satisfy physiological needs before bothering about safety needs, that his need changes as he gets satisfied and that he cannot be satisfied by a higher need unless a more basic one has been satisfied. This theory is very important for the marketer to know how important his product is to the customer by determining the position the product occupies in the consumer’s scale of preference.

Empirical Literature Review

According to Callen (2010) in marketing communication, Marketing Communication Mix message is first encoded to create an advertisement, or displaying sales presentation of the product then transmitted through a selected media or any other vehicle which can convey the message; when the recipient receives the message, the

message is decoded whereby the receiver compares the message to the frame of reference and then knowledge, belief and feelings of the receiver is changed according to the message received. However, the response of the receiver will range from a simple awareness to actual purchase depending on the intensity of the message and the vehicle used to give out the message. Hence after the response of the receiver, feedback can be measured using market research, sales volume or any other appropriate measure. Therefore, the marketer will be able to measure if the message was received as intended to be a promotional idea in the marketers mind and if it was successful. However, amidst the process of communication, a distraction can occur such as competing messages and other distractions which are categorized to be noise (Callen, 2010). Marketing companies use assorted techniques of communication to support their offerings in turn to accomplish

their advertising objectives under the marketing mix. According to Kotler and Keller (2013), the marketing communications mix is consisted of six key elements, although other authors list more. These are: sales promotion, advertising, publicity and public relations, direct marketing, personal selling, events and experiences (sponsorship). Kitchen, Pelsmacker, Eagle & Schultz (2005) conducted a study on marketing communication strategies to find out if they are a form of revolutionized concept which corrupts the consumers' minds with different things. Posters, packaging and sponsoring events all aim at increasing consumption of manufactured products therefore the study examined the power of marketing communication mix leading to the appearance and explosion of promotion activities. These activities are aimed at the overwhelming public in turn to exercise a persuasive influence. The study concluded

that a type of monster has been revealed in the sense of enhanced marketing and business communications action approved by companies in an increasingly competitive and unstable environment. The monster has the prospective to be a type of contamination possibly as damaging to human brains as damaging to the atmosphere and its consequences on the physical body. Moreover, this prospective pollution has not been sufficiently identified or observed by academicians and practitioners alike. However, proof of such pollution formed by marketing communications strategies has not presented in the research study. However, Davis (2004) study on effective communication strategies in a franchise company; a case of bakers' delight holdings Australia, was a case study and a survey where data was collected by qualitative questionnaire. Franchisee support for policies varied significantly. The study concluded that it is

relevantly easy to communicate marketing strategies and corporate goals to the franchisers than expecting them to respond to their own communication strategies. A research gap of the study is that the study was done on a case study and conducted through a survey of sample data information from one source and cross-sectional type of research which did not require a long time period. An overall review of research studies done on marketing communication mix components concluded that there is a convincing result of a positive or significant relationship between marketing communication strategies used and sales performance of a product.

The Role of Marketing Communication

According to American Marketing Association (AMA), marketing communication is when a customer received the planning process from all brand contacts

for a product or service that is relevant to them and consistent all over the time. It aims to ensure the message is delivering together with the use of media (PIMT, 2014). Consumer behavior can be change as an effect of gaining new knowledge from reading, observation, discussion or actual experience whereas marketing communication component is to deliver information to customers so they could have a better understanding of the distribution of the product and the product knowledge (Mihart, 2012). The most important goal of marketing communication channel is to form and change consumer's attitude with the influence of product, price and distribution but also depends on consumer attitude and direct or indirect experience with that products or services (Fazio, Sanbonmatsu, Powell, & Kardes, 1986).

➤ Sales Marketing Communication

Communicating with your customers keeps them apprised of new happenings in your business and fulfills the objective of promoting your products and services. This can include new product launches, sales, expansion or introduction of new offerings. The objective of this form of marketing communication is to encourage customers to act or to keep them involved with your business. One example of sales marketing communication is an e-mail blast that informs consumers about an upcoming, limited-time sale and provides a link to the company's online product catalog where they can immediately take advantage of the savings opportunity.

➤ **Providing Information and Education**

Many effective forms of marketing communication provide customers or potential customers with information about your product, service, business or industry.

For example, an accountant that publishes and distributes a newsletter on tax tips is establishing himself as a expert in the industry by way of educating the public about basic accounting practices. The objective of this form of marketing communication is to establish the knowledge of the business and its expertise, while encouraging people to use more in-depth services.

➤ **Retention of Existing Customers**

An objective of effective marketing communication is to retain your existing customers and increase their investment in your business. establishing customer reward programs that are presented through marketing mediums like direct mail help achieve this. Letting your customers know you appreciate their business and presenting them with opportunities to save money, while at the same time upselling them to

new, more or better products, results in increased income for your small business.

➤ **Referrals from Existing Customers**

Bringing in new business by way of existing customers is an objective of marketing communication practices. Communicating with existing customers via social media, email and your website and encouraging them to refer you to others creates an independent sales team that works on your behalf. Rewarding customers for their referrals further solidifies your relationship with them at the same time.

➤ **Building Brand Awareness**

Every communication message you share should reinforce your brand image in the mind of consumers. This can be accomplished through consistent messaging and a commonly-used color scheme, logo and graphic design on all marketing materials. Consumers will associate your

message and image with your product, creating a strong brand identity.

Discussion

Numerous research has conducted regarding consumer behavior are related to high involvement in marketing communication. Effective marketing communications has to be consistency in deliver message in order to build a positive perception and trust on target customers (Kitchen & Schultz, 2003). Marketing communication is effective in changing consumers behavior especially when it is used to deliver a specific and clear message with broadcast media such as television or radio. Advertisement through newspaper, magazine, billboard, radio or television is an emotional connection with consumers to stimulus consumers' wants and needs whereas online communication channel is an easiest and fastest way for them to gain more information about that certain products

or services. When consumers are interest on that certain products or services, word-of-mouth will be use among friends and family to attract them to find more information through the Internet. Mostly, it use the combinations of online marketing communication and offline marketing communication same goes to some consumers. Therefore, it is vital for a marketer to use both online and offline marketing communications channel to stimulus the needs and wants from every category of consumers.

Conclusion

In a society of conspicuous and comparative consumption, marketers should have a better understanding of which, why, when, where and how consumer will spend. Marketers must have a great knowledge of consumer behavior and generation segmentation in order for the marketing communication channel to work effectively. When

marketers have a great knowledge on consumer behavior, it will allow them to apply the most effective marketing communication tools on this complex consumerism. Besides, marketing communication is important for personal connection between product and consumer. Marketers that utilize marketing communication wisely will successfully change consumer behavior and establish brand loyalty thus develop long term trust within their customer. Other than that, market segmentation is beneficial to an organization as it determine the target market and uses the proper marketing communication channel. Different generations of consumers have different orientation in purchasing a products and services. Thus, marketers should formulate a proper marketing communication channel according to their needs. By understand the generation of consumers preferences, marketer could allocate marketing resources

wisely and advertise effectively as brand loyalty often starts with the proper marketing communication about the products or services.

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