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Advertising and Marketing Strategies: What crafters of new Kenya ought to learn

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.....ii

Abstract..... iii

Introduction..... 1

1.0 Advertising and marketing defined.....3

1.1.1 Marketing defined.....3

1.1.2 Advertising and Marketing process.....3

2.0 Traditional Advertising..... 4

2.1 Threats to Traditional Advertising.....5

2.2 Trends in Advertising and Marketing.....6

3.1 Impact of Internet Technology.....7

3.2 Online advertising..... 7

3.3 New advertising platform.....	8
3.4 Digital interactive media.....	9
4.0 Theoretical framework.....	10
Conclusion.....	11
Recommendation.....	11
References.....	12

Abstract

Advertisers and marketers in new Kenya have vast opportunities to be exploited. Since the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010, devolution to the counties has extended frontiers in advertising and marketing. In the devolved system of government of Kenya today, a lot of financial and human resources have been directed to the counties where a lot of business can be made. This paper will look at advertising and marketing strategies the crafters of new Kenya ought to learn so as to maximize on their returns on investment. The paper will explore the changes that have occurred to marketing over time and those principles and practices that have endured. There are threats to traditional advertising that need to be embraced. It is important for the crafters on new Kenya to be alive to the fact that even with all the advantages of advertising, its ubiquitous nature has led to advertising-weary consumers who seize every available opportunity to avoid it. The crafters will also need to learn the new technologies that have impacted the way advertisement is done separate from traditional advertising. This paper will look at the new advertising platforms and new techniques that advertisers need to embrace. The paper also makes recommendations on what the crafters of new Kenya need to learn to mitigate the threats that engulf traditional advertising and marketing.

Introduction

Advertising is a crucial component of an organization marketing plan which helps it achieve its marketing goals and objectives. For an organization to realize its return on investment and gain profitability, it must skillfully devise its advertising and marketing strategies to effectively capture its target audiences and its target markets.

Advertising is mainly communication which is characterized by the dimensions of strategy, creativity and execution (Wells et al, 2003). Marketing, on the other hand, is a process involving creating, pricing, delivering and exchanging products that have value for its target customers. The importance of advertising and marketing cannot be gainsaid. Advertising is important to both the marketer and the consumer. Wells et. al., (2003) gives four important roles of advertising. These are:-

- the marketing role where it seeks to satisfy the needs and wants of a consumer through goods and services.
- the communication role where it transmits different types of marketing information to match buyers and sellers in the market place.
- the economic role that helps consumer assess value through price as quality, location and reputation
- the societal role where it informs consumers about new products and helps them compare products and features to be able to make informed decision.

Belch & Belch (2009) also see advertising as an integral part of our social and economic systems. They add that advertising has evolved into a vital communications system.

They add that advertising has evolved into vital communications for both the consumers and businesses in our complex society. Large companies and small retailers all rely on advertisement to help them market their products and services.

According to Dominick (2009) advertising fulfills a marketing function by helping companies that provide products and services sell their products. It also creates competition thus encouraging product improvements and lowering of prices. By reaching a mass audience, advertising reduces greatly the cost of personal selling and distribution.

This paper discusses what the crafters of Kenya ought to learn about contemporary advertising. Advertising has undergone to tremendous transformation in the recent past from the traditional media of radio TV and newspaper; traditional audiences who were passive recipients of advertisements who had no choice but to sit through advertisements and endure frequent interruptions in the form of commercial breaks; an audience that was captive and limited by the scope of the traditional media

The crafters of new Kenya will have to learn that today's audience is an empowered media user who controls and shapes content. As Garfield (2007) puts it, advertisement- as-interruption is over and the new generation responds differently to advertising.

This paper will discuss how the internet has made media interactive and brought an opt-in culture and also introduced advertising-barring technology and what should be done to mitigate these and other emergent challenges in advertising

1.0 Advertising and Marketing-defined

1.1 Advertising

According to Arens & Arens (2009), advertising is the structured and composed non- personal communication of information, usually paid for and usually persuasive in nature, about products (goods, services and ideas) by identified sponsors through various media. They see advertising as a business, as a marketing tool and as a creative process. Advertising is a dynamic hybrid discipline that employs numerous elements of the arts and sciences, they add, that has a subtle ability to reach out and touch everyone living and working in the modern world.

1.1.1 Marketing defined

Marketing is defined by Arens & Arens (1998) as the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, distribution and promotion of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy the perceived needs, wants, and objectives of individuals and organizations. They say that the ultimate goal of the marketing process is to earn profit for the firm by communicating the exchange of products and services with those customers who need or want them.

1.1.2 Advertising and the marketing process

According to Arens & Arens (2008) advertisement helps the organization achieve its marketing goals. One needs to have a good understanding of the marketing process to know what type of advertising to use in a given situation.

We can see then that advertising and marketing are in an interdependent relationship and this mutualism is driven by profits and return-on-investment.

2.0 Traditional advertising

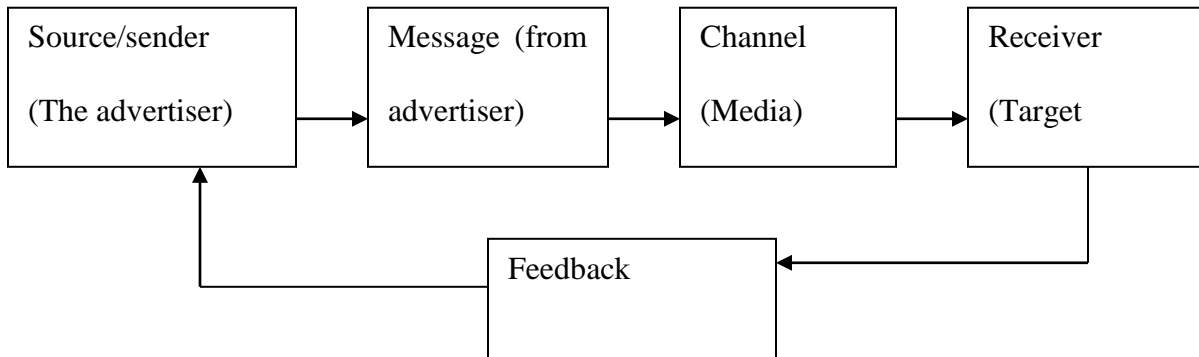
The emphasis of traditional advertising is on selling to the vast, anonymous crowd. Turrow (2009) says the aim of traditional advertising is to create and distribute persuasive messages with the aim of creating a favourable impression of the products in the minds of target consumers to lead them to buy from stores. This is the age of what Belch (2009) calls the “30-second spot” kind of advertising. Dominick (2009) weighs in by saying that this model is whereby advertisers interrupt a programme to place an advertisement in the hope that someone sees or hears them.

This mass media marketing tries to get the attention of the consumers and hopes to influence their purchasing decision by persuading them by argument, reasoning or emotional appeal. Gill (2008) calls it the old approach to advertising where advertisers pay for the privilege of exposing a theoretical audience to their message. They give credence to marshal McLuhan’s declaration that “the medium is the message”.

This leads to a basic communication model where communication is a one-way process with the message moving from the source to the receiver.

Traditional advertising seems to be modeled along the hypodermic needle theory of communication. The theory which was proposed by Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) has the assumption that mass media could influence a very large group of people directly and uniformly, by injecting them with appropriate messages designed to trigger a desired response. It suggested that the media has a direct and power influence.

However, in 1940 it was disproved through a study conducted by Lazarsfeld dubbed the “People’s Choice” about the American president, Franklin Roosevelt, election campaign and the effects of media messages.



There is feedback that is gotten from monitoring the response of the receiver through research and opinion polls.

2.1 Threats to traditional advertising

There are numerous threats to traditional advertising that we need to take cognizance of. Advertising is found everywhere at every conceivable and available space or time leading to advertising clutter. This ubiquitous nature of advertising has led to advertisement –weary consumers who prefer an opt-in culture. Belch (2009) says the new generation of consumer is skeptical on traditional advertising. They respond to advertising differently and prefer to encounter marketing messages in different places and from different sources.

Turrow (2009) says today people may not pay attention to advertisements even when staring at them. Many people may not sit still to watch advertisements on TV or listen to them over the radio. Instead they may take commercial breaks as opportunities to visit the bathroom or surf

through channels. The captive, passive audience is waning due to proliferation of media channels and the onset of newer technologies.

2.2 Trends in advertising and marketing

There is an emerging generation of empowered media users who control and shape context, (Belch, 2009). It is a generation that is skeptical on traditional advertising and responds to advertising differently. It also prefers to encounter marketing messages in different places from different sources.

This has been brought about by media proliferation aided by development of the internet and technology. The audience is no longer limited by the scope of traditional media which gave marketers a captive audience through mass media that would sit through commercials.

The internet and technology have brought about new advertising platforms and new advertising techniques. These advancements have enabled advertisement-fatigued consumers to avoid commercial messages altogether, something that has left advertisers a worried lot.

Advancements such as TiVo, the iPod, video-on-demand and the internet give audience the power to choose, when, where and how they look for news and entertainment (Gill, 2008). There are advertising and spam-blocking software, which enable consumers to block commercial messages. The technology can kill pop-ups, filter e-mail and get rid of unwanted advertisements (Turrow 2008).

Belch (2009) talks of the new age of micromarketing. He says advertising and marketing has moved from mass marketing to micromarketing driven by necessity and opportunity the market is much more diverse and commercially self-indulgent.

Gartified (2007) calls this the 'Post-Advertising Age' where advertisement-as-interruption is over and sees it as the death of the 30-second spot. Instead what is preferred is an opt-in culture. It is a shift from emphasis on selling to the vast anonymous crowd to selling to millions of particular customers (Blanco 2004).

Due to proliferation of digital communication channels, narrow-cast-cable TV and radio channels, advertising can be made more relevant to specifically targeted audiences. The personal computer, cell-phone, fiber-optic and interactive TV have all transformed advertising and the marketing landscape

3.1 Impact of internet technology

The internet has exponentially increased the number of available channels of communication. From cell phones, e-mail, facebook, twitter, WhatsApp and many others have given the consumers more control over the communication process. The consumer can own adopt a more proactive attitude since he can easily search, select and access information.

The audiences no longer accept every message pushed to them they only access information that suits their interests and needs. Marketers therefore need to customize their messages to fit the new realities.

3.2 Online advertising

There are new tools for online advertising that reduce waste separate from the old approach to advertising where advertisers pay for the privilege of exposing a theoretical audience to their message (Wells, et el 2003). With the new tools, advertisers pay only for real and measurable

action by consumers, such as clicking on the web link, sharing a video, placing a call or buying something.

According to Wells, et al (2005), online advertising was pioneered by Bill Gross in 1996 when he started 'idealabs', an overture market for "paid search" or pay-per-click advertising. In 2002, founders of Google came up with an idea of putting links next to relevant search results and charging per click

Wells et. al., (2005) say that the Google founders added 'ad sense' which places advertisement links on the web pages of newspapers. The advertisements are relevant or "contextual" to the pages content and advertisers pay for them only when a web surfer clicks. There are many platforms for online advertising such as display advertising, search engine marketing, mobile advertising, e-mail advertising and online classified ads.

Online advertisement empowers consumers because they can choose to visit a website, or internet site, find what they want and order (Wells et al 2005).

3.3 New advertising platforms

a) Search engine internet

These have high traffic and organize their audience into subject categories. They can attract young audience which is otherwise hard to reach. They help people find sites that they are interested in and match sites and advertisers (Vivian J, 2011).

b) Gaming –video sites

A number of people spend a lot of time gaming, especially the youth. This group is a very elusive target for advertisers, and to get them, advertisers integrate advertising messages with games for gamers to see the advertisements (Vivian J, 2011)

c) Word of mouth advertising

Word of mouth testimonials with friends talking to friends can create buzz-advertising. Clever clips created by advertisers can lead to viral advertising when visitors to sites draw in other people to the sites.

d) Under-the-radar advertising

Advertisers create their content to reach their audience subtly, even covertly. The consumer may not know they are being targeted unless they are really attentive. This is what is called stealth advertisements.

e) Product placement

Another way is when advertisers wiggle brand name products into movies scripts. They also place a brand name on one corner of the TV screen. Radio advertisements also mention products and their uses an ongoing programme as a matter of fact.

3.4 Digital interactive media

The new media offers true interactivity enabling advertisers to develop and nurture relationships with their customers on a global scale at very efficient costs (Arens et al, 2008). This is found on the internet and all associated online services.

Interactive media makes the medium addressable by offering multiple possibilities of interactive communication. It acts as an interface and a communication agent that allows direct interaction between individuals and software application. Rowley (2001, 2004) says the audience needs are customized or can be customizable.

Advertising spending in digital interactive is growing rapidly due to the increased use and availability of improved mobile handsets, inexpensive laptops, faster broad bands and inexpensive Wi-Fi and fibre-optic connections.

According to Shrum and Lowery (2009), interactive online media allow consumers to actively participate in the advertising process, select the information they receive and build an instantaneous two-way dialogue with advertisers. They say that the bi-directional flow of information assumes that each party has at least some level of control over the communication process.

Interactivity has been seen to affect information processing and decision making. Shrum and Liu (2002), posit that interactivity affects a consumer's cognitive involvement with and elaboration of advertising messages.

4.1 Theoretical framework

Severin & Tankard (1974), agreed that 'Uses and Gratifications Theory' can be applicable in interactive media. The theory which was proposed by Katz and Blumler, allows audience to use media for their personal needs, which is determined by their social and psychological background.

The theory suggests that media users seek out a medium source that best fulfills their needs although they have alternative choices to satisfy their needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974).

The theory accepts the role of receivers as active audience that interprets, negotiates, resists or subverts advertising meanings when encountering media managers.

However, the theory was later criticized for failing to take into account economic, cultural influences in receiving media.

CONCLUSION

This paper has looked at the traditional advertising and this noted the transformation in the media landscape. It has also noted that the audience has changed due to the availability of numerous media channels due to the onset of the internet. We have also showed how marketers have inundate the marketing landscape with advertising messages, leading to advertisement clutter to a point of making consumers fatigued and striving to avoid them.

RECOMMENDATION

Marketers, especially in the new Kenya, must look for creative ways to reach their consumers with advertising messages. They must realize that the audience is active and must be taken into consideration when marketing messages are being crafted.

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