

PROMOTING BRAND LOYALTY THROUGH ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN: QUALITATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIAN BREWERIES MALTINA PRODUCT

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Abstract

Organizations are forced to anticipate customers' needs and convey clear messages to them through advertising by establishing strong brand names and focusing on brand building. But to what extent can Advertising influence consumers' purchase decision especially in products branding? Hence, the study examined the extent to which advertising campaigns have been used to promote brand loyalty of Maltina product by Nigerian Breweries PLC among its consumers. The study adopts qualitative research methods with the use of in-depth interview and Participant Observation to gather data. Two prominent departments (sales and marketing) were visited while key Managers and Officers were interviewed with close observation to provide insight into the organization's viewpoints to the study. The study revealed that persuasive advertising messages determine consumer's desire for the product(s), with the use of television for the promotion of Maltina as a brand to consumers. This explains the reason why Nigerian Breweries plc. still holds the Maltina family television game show every year. The study also revealed that understanding the needs and wants of the consumers and the venue to which the adverts will be placed to reach the target demographic are the major priorities before designing any advertising message. Other strategies such as celebrities used in the adverts, the family game show (Maltina Dance All), slogans, packaging and television adverts have been effective in increasing purchase for Maltina product. It was also revealed that sales for Maltina product went up with each of these strategies which buttress the fact that product advertising is germane to brand loyalty.

Keywords: Brand Loyalty, Product Advertising, Consumers, Maltina, Nigerian Breweries

Introduction

Brands are important because they shape customers' decisions and ultimately create economic value (Czinkota and Ronkainen, 2010). Brand is a key factor behind the decision to purchase in business to consumer operations. There is a great variety of concepts relating to brands and branding. From the beginning, a brand was used to mark ownership of cattle. In modern times, brands function as symbols that enable consumers to identify and separate one product from another, with the ability to trace one good back to the manufacturer holding it responsible for its quality. They are today ascribed with almost divine characteristics serving as a strategic business asset essential for firms to develop if they are to compete successfully (Bertilsson, 2009).

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The brand from the brand manager's perspective is a name to be exploited to satisfy short-term sales and goals. But for the consumer, the brand might be the meaning the brand brings to the consumer. Also, a brand may be viewed not solely as a sign added to products to differentiate them from competing goods, but as a semiotic engine whose function is to constantly produce meanings and values. Earlier scholars identify four complementary views of brands from the consumer's perspective: a visual identifier, a guarantee of consistent quality, a shorthand device, and an expression of self-concept. The idea behind is that brands can speed up and simplify consumers' choices, and that they might reduce any believed performance risk. Melin (2010) in Aperia and Back (2004) has looked at another angle of brand and branding. He states that brand building is a process which takes place both within the company and in consumers' minds. A central part of the brand building process, according to Melin, is the concept of core value; that is the brand's primary differentiation advantage which provides the basis for the brand's positioning. The basic argument is that unique core values should be developed to give the brand an ability to compete. In all cases Melin investigated, the consumer and her or his needs were in the centre for choices of core value (Melin, 2010), and this is very similar to the traditional view of branding from 1960. In literature about brands, it is often stated that the company appreciates strong brands because they are assets which contribute to strong profitability, and consumers appreciate them because they reduce uncertainty. Aperia and Back (2004) however, bring forward the importance of branding for the distributors in fast moving consumer goods sector (FMCG). For them, strong brands create sales in the shops.

Weber (2009) sees branding from another perspective, which is a promise to your customer. It provides the needed information about the products and services and differentiates them from other competitors' products. He further asserts that a brand is derived from what the product is, what the product wants to be and consumers' perception about the products. As consumers are bombarded with a variety of products to meet the same need, branding provides a way for consumers to reduce their decision making to consider only those products that they feel are relevant to them or that have met their needs acceptably in the past. A strong brand is an important corporate asset. The basic reason is that people must know about a company and its brands before committing themselves.

A brand is an emotional and physiological relationship a firm has with a customer. Therefore, strong brands elicit thoughts, emotion and sometimes-physiological responses from a customer. A brand is a source of a promise to its customers. It promises relevant differentiated benefits. It does so not only to place itself into the purchase consideration set, but even more importantly, to be the brand chosen from that purchase consideration set. This is also sometimes referred to as the brand's unique value proposition. Whether it is called a unique value proposition or a promise

of relevant differentiated benefits, it is very important that the promise or proposition be delivered consistently at each point of customer contact, time after time (Torres-Moraga, Vasquez-Parraaga, & Zamora-Gonzalez 2008).

Brands are the identifications that differentiate one business from another (through name, symbol etc.). However, today brands can also be defined as the personality they reflect to people in relation to status, emotional characteristics and subjective quality. They give the consumers a perceived knowledge of the product, its quality and uniqueness before they buy it. Brands ensure delivery of service as promised by them. They make easy for the consumers to identify what they want and which brand to choose for it. It is important for a brand to accomplish the claim advertised to retain Brand Image. Advertising is one of the key elements in building a brand, which is equally important to the marketers and consumers. Brand personality acts as a potent brand differentiator and offers sustainable competitive advantage. Advertising by creating or reinforcing brand's personality enhances brand value or equity which in turn can be leveraged through brand extension. Brand personality also helps brands to gain market share, command price premium and insulate from discounting brands (VanAuken, 2011).

Building a strong brand name is a key factor for business success. In the competitive business environment of today, consumer sophistication has altered business practices. Organizations are forced to anticipate customers' needs and convey clear messages to them by establishing strong brand names and focusing on brand building. A brand's practical attributes and symbolic values are inherent elements that help the brand appeal on consumers' minds and emotion. When consumers relate brands with symbols, it becomes easier for an organization to raise consumer interest. For instance, Lexus is known for luxury, or Apple is known for innovation. Therefore, in consumers' minds, a brand is more than just a recognizable name: it is a promise that needs to be met on a regular basis.

Advertising is important for building brand awareness. By raising consumers' interest and ensuring consumers' awareness of their products and services, firms not only expand their customer base, but they also keep their loyal customers and increase their market share. In other words, the more aware consumers are of a brand, the more likely they are to buy from a particular business.

Approaches in Brand Building

To make brand distinctive, brand building can be done through repetitive advertising. Also, by highlighting unique selling proposition one can distinguish brand from one another. Other approaches to brand building involve:

1. **Constant innovation:** This is when consumers need continuous innovation and new products. It is not always a new product; even an improvement on the existing

product is acceptable to the consumers. Through intensive advertising such brands are built which is time consuming.

2. **Domination of brand:** Brand building largely depends on the domination it creates on the competitors. Domination can take place either in national market or in niche market.

3. **Prompt availability:** Prompt delivery of the product is one of the factors that ensure brand building. This is possible if there is proper coordination among the finance, production and marketing department.

4. **Integration of new and old media:** Consumers have ever changing demand. Due to availability of various media options the seller can push the product in the market by blending multiple media options. Thus, advertising messages are flashed to consumers through media mix.

Hence, for brand to be established among the consumers there is need to communicate it to them appropriately. Brand communication will go a long way to bridge the gap in the perceptions the target audiences have about the brand. In other words, brand communication can be described as an interactive dialogue between the organization and customer in the stages: prior to sale, during sale in course, use of the product and continues to the end-use product. It answers two basic questions: How the organization will find customers and how customers will find the organization. The main objectives of marketing communication include: building a product preference with potential customer, inform consumers about products or services and their benefits, differentiate their offering from competitors' to convince potential buyers to purchase the product or service, further remind them and not least to familiarise customers about philosophy and values of the firm (Vastikova, 2008).

There are six principal brand communications tools: advertising, word of mouth communication (WOMC), sales promotion, public relations, direct marketing and personal selling. However, there have been some major changes in the environment and in the way organisations communicate with their target audiences. New technology has given rise to a raft of different media, while people have developed a variety of ways to spend their leisure time. This is referred to as media and audience fragmentation, and organisations have developed fresh combinations of the promotional mix in order to reach their audiences effectively. For example, there has been a dramatic rise in the use of direct-response media as direct marketing becomes adopted as part of the marketing plan for many products. The Internet and digital

technologies have made possible new interactive forms of communication, where the receivers have greater responsibility for their part in the communication process.
History of Nigerian Breweries.

Nigerian Breweries Plc., the pioneer and largest brewing company in Nigeria, was incorporated in 1946. In June 1949, the company recorded a landmark when the first bottle of STAR lager beer rolled off its Lagos Brewery bottling lines. This first brewery in Lagos has undergone several optimization processes and as at today boasts of the most modern brew house in the country. In 1957, the company commissioned its second brewery in Aba. Kaduna Brewery was commissioned in 1963 while Ibadan Brewery came on stream in 1982. In 1993, the company acquired its fifth brewery in Enugu. In October 2003, a sixth brewery, sited at Ameke, in Enugu State was commissioned and christened Ama Brewery. Ama Brewery is today, the biggest and most modern brewery in Nigeria. Operations in the Old Enugu Brewery were however discontinued in 2004, while the company acquired a malting Plant in Aba in 2008. Nigerian Breweries acquired majority equity interests in Sona Systems Associates Business Management Limited, (Sona Systems) and Life Breweries Limited from Heineken N.V. In 2010, Nigerian Breweries won the prestigious Pearl award for Sectoral Leadership in the Brewery sector. In the same year, Star, Nigeria's favourite lager and Maltina, the nation's No 1 malt drink, were awarded prizes for their innovative Television Commercials at the Lagos Advertising Ideas Festival organized by the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria, AAAN. These are in addition to several awards from philanthropic organizations, clubs, institutions and government agencies.

Statement of the Problem

Advertising is all about brand; when a brand wins, adverts wins, but when a brand fails adverts fail. This is significant and it plays a major role in today's age of competition. Studies have shown that most advertising problems come from the organization, media and environment. The problem with most advertising companies in Nigeria is that the company and the ownership are always the same. They do not know the type of media suitable for each advert targeted at the consumer and they do not know the product satisfaction of their consumer. It is often difficult for consumer to recognize a new product regardless of branding because such products are not memorable, easy to spell and pronounce. Kotler & Armstrong (2008) note that, a symbol constitutes any geometric shape or any other defined image that has the ability of forming an easy to remember mental image in the consumer mind. This concept aids brand recognition. Advertising is a tool for brand building; it is one of the best ways to gain brand recognition and brand awareness, nevertheless cannot easily manipulate the consumer choice because they respond to adverts that offer them tangible benefits that meet their need. Studies have shown that only about half of all

commercials actually have positive effects on consumer purchasing behaviour or brand choice. Many products today have gone into extinction because of the poor advertising message and poor branding strategy. Consumers see branding as an effective tool of consumerism so they expect maximum satisfaction from the use of each brand in order to remain loyal because a level of quality must have been placed on such brand (Osunbiyi, 2001). Branding is important to the consumers because it enables consumers to identify their products from others. It is on this basis this study investigates the factors that Nigerian Breweries puts into consideration in its advertising strategies when branding its Maltina product and how these strategies have promoted brand loyalty among its consumers.

Research Objective

The research objectives for the study are to:

- a. Examine the factors considered by Nigerian Breweries in designing advertising campaign for Maltina products?
- b. How has Nigerian Breweries Advertising strategies promoted brand loyalty of Maltina products to the consumers?
- c. How has Nigerian Breweries Advertising strategies influence consumer's perception of Maltina product brand?

Method

The study adopted a qualitative research method with the use of in-depth interview and Participant Observation. Key Officers of the sales and marketing department were selected to share their opinion about the organization branding strategies.

Interview Instrument

The interview guide contained twelve structured open-ended questions which were used to elicit the needed responses and insight about the organization's viewpoints since Maltina drink was rebranded through the Maltina Dance All.

Data Collection/Ethical Issues

The interview was conducted within Nigeria Breweries plc Ibadan office as directed by the headquarter office in Lagos. The officers in the sales and marketing department were visited and a convenient time fixed for those choosing to speak on behalf of the organization. Prior to the interview the issue of organization ethics was discussed and both parties have a common understanding that the study is basically for academic research which nevertheless will not affect the organization image but it will rather promote it. Also, the interview questions were shared with each officer who

volunteered to be interviewed before the commencement of the interview. Each interview with a key officer was tape recorded with a backup by a note taker.

Data Analysis

The recorded interview responses were transcribed and analyzed using the emergent themes technique which involves identifying, sorting and discussing emergent themes relevant to the research objectives of the study.

Findings/Discussion

The three research objectives for the study were presented and discussed under the following headings.

Factors Considered for Designing Advertising Campaign for Maltina Brand

The objective is to determine the factors taken into consideration by Nigerian Breweries Plc in designing Maltina Dance All advertising campaign for Maltina drink. In an interview conducted with one of the Sales Managers of the organization, responses revealed that one of the major factors considered by the organisation in designing advertising messages is to understand the needs of the consumers.

What consumers feel or think about a company and or its product is a key aspect of business success. Understanding the needs and wants of consumers, is very crucial in designing advert messages. This is because when we know what our customers want, advert messages can then be designed to suite these needs. A consumer research, in form of a market survey, is usually carried out to determine the needs of consumers.

The response from the sales manager revealed that consumer research is one of the factors that are considered before designing any advertising campaign. One of the Zonal Marketing Manager supporting this view stated that:

...before an advert will be done it is important to do at least some basic research, we will ask our current customer question about why they come back to you, as well as taking a close look at our target demographic needs and interests. We will get our consumers feedback about Maltina drink in terms of quality and quantity and their response will determine on how we will work on the product and the next adverts

In other words, the needs and wants of consumers are taken as a priority before designing advertising messages, which are aimed at meeting these needs. This is determined from the periodic market survey conducted by the organisation. It was observed that the cordial relationship between the organization and their publics has

promoted the company interest and desire for its product (Sajuyigbe, Amusat, & Oloyede, 2013:22-26). Another factor to be considered by the company is the issue of budget. The budget determines the cost of any production or the type of advert message to be produced to target the consumers. The Sales Manager revealed that:

the budget is put into consideration to know how much it will cost the company in writing and designing a creative advertising message, the advertising venue is also important to know the right place to place an advert that will reach your target demographic. Consumers are set of human beings that cannot be easily pleased. They go for products based on quantity and not quality i.e. cheap and affordable goods that is why we in the sales department are trying to maintain a good price quality ratio along with regularly continuing in the act of campaign and improve more in our promotional strategy.

This reveals that before any advert message will be designed, it is important to understand the need of your consumers. This shows the importance of budgeting in advertising message production and promotion. Also, it supports selective perception theory which states that consumers select certain advertising messages and only pay attention to some of them. Wells, Moriarty and Burnett (2006:104) explain selective perception and assert that consumers will receive information most relevant to their needs. They describe this as perceptual vigilance. When a consumer wants to buy a product which requires high involvement, perceptual vigilance will ensure that the consumer only attends to and retains relevant information. If the consumer wants to buy a product which requires low involvement, he/she would exercise perceptual vigilance in order to screen out information to minimize information processing. This emphasizes the importance of perceptual defence for advertisers and marketers. Consumers will selectively perceive certain advertising message and will not pay attention to conflicting or irrelevant message. If consumers only perceive advertising messages which are relevant to their need and want, advertiser should ensure that advertising messages reach the correct market segment and therefore those consumers who are mainly open to persuasion.

How Advertising Strategies Have promoted Brand Loyalty of Maltina to the Consumers

The purpose of examining this issue is to find out the various advertising strategies of Nigerian Breweries Plc, for Maltina and their use in persuading consumers to become loyal to the brand. Advertising helps to create awareness from a sponsor to various consumers about the availability of specific products or services in the market. Advertising informs the public about something they are not aware of or something

that has been with them but they never took note of it. The importance of advertising in brand building cannot be overemphasized. In the view of one of the officers in the marketing department, advertising is an important promotional strategy to us because:

I t has not only helped in building brand image for Maltina drink in the market alone, but it has also helped to build the image of the company as a whole in and outside the market environment. It has also helped to create awareness of various products from Nigerian breweries. We have embarked on the use of advertising because it is persuasive enough to convince and not to confuse the consumers, to make a purchase decision and act in a desired direction. As a company, our adverts are a reflection of our company and products to the consumers.

Responses from other officers in the department show that the advertising strategies employed by the organisation have been effective and encouraged brand loyalty. In the submission of one of them, "Our advertising message has been effective to a great extent. I can hopefully boast that 92 percent of Nigerians are fully aware of Nigerian breweries and their products most especially Maltina through television". Hence, television adverts, as a promotional strategy, have also been found out to be very effective in ensuring brand loyalty from consumers. Another Sales Officer stated that television adverts from Nigerian Breweries, for Maltina, are aimed at building awareness. According to her,

we do not package our television advert messages anyhow, in ways that will not create awareness, because money and time was well invested. Our television adverts are focused on all consumers, new and potential, thereby ensuring that they become brand loyal to Maltina.

She further adds that, "we use celebrity in our TV advert to boost our products. The use of celebrities in Maltina adverts has encouraged customers to become loyal to the brand." This view reinforces the use of celebrities in adverts to promote brand loyalty. Celebrities are people who enjoy public recognition and mostly they are the experts of their respective fields having wider influence in public life and societal domain. Celebrity endorser is an individual who is known by the public for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed. Celebrities appear in public in different ways. They appear in public when fulfilling their professional commitments (Cacioppo & Schuman, 1983, Biswas, Abhijit & Neel, 2006, Kahle & Kahle (2006)). An example is Nigerian actor, Jide Kosoko in Yoyo Bitter advertisement as the head of the family that takes Yoyo Bitter after every meal; Aishwaya Rai an Indian actress endorsed Lux by testifying to the quality; Ini Edo, Funke Akindele, Desmond Elliot all endorsed Globacom adverts; Omotola Jolade

endorsed Holland Yourgut advert. There is the use of footballer like Lionel Messi to advertise Pepsi. These footballers are not experts of Pepsi, but they endorse the product to attract and encourage their fans to buy the product.

It was revealed that when celebrities are used in Maltina adverts, consumers, because of the likeness they have for the celebrity, it makes them to become loyal brand consumers of Maltina. The Sales Manager reveals that

We also use celebrities as a strong promotional strategy for Maltina. Examples include Kaffy Shafau Ameh the popular Nigerian dance queen, world record breaker and a dance instructor who is always used to promoting the Maltina family dance show; Kemi Basseyy Adetiba, Maltina dance hall host and a sexiest celebrity of 2012, award winning director, producer, cinematographer, popular TV host and on air personality. Our sales went up when we did a market survey on our customers, we found that it was the celebrity used that enabled the sales to go up.

This shows that the use of celebrities, as an advert promotional strategy therefore, has been very effective in promoting Maltina product drink. Furthermore, it was revealed that the family game show – Maltina Dance All–has also helped to create awareness, recall, as well as brand loyalty for the product. According to the Marketing Manager, “Maltina Dance All has been the most successful of all our promotional strategies.” This opinion is further corroborated by the sales manager, who opines that:

as far as I can recall, the gifts that are awarded to families who have participated and also won in the Maltina Dance All, have boosted consumer's interest in patronizing Maltina drink. The promotional strategy is also a means of getting the attention of the consumers, and making them know what Nigerian Breweries has to offer in terms of our products and services, products' various features, benefits of our products, the price and use.

This therefore implies that so far, the greatest advertising promotional strategy, employed by the Nigerian Breweries, in ensuring brand loyalty for Maltina drink, has been through the family game show series. This has further boosted the sales for the product and ensured that consumers became loyal to the brand. Nigerian Breweries also promoted quality as well as quantity Maltina drinks. The advertising promotional strategies employed by Nigerian Breweries, for Maltina, have been very effective. This is because the aim of these adverts is to increase the purchase for Maltina. This implies that, advertising promotional strategies can be very effective in

encouraging sales for a product. Hence, effective advertising messages should be well packaged to get the attention of consumers, thereby encouraging sales.

How Advertising strategies influence consumer's perception of Maltina brand

In a study conducted by Clow and Back (2007), cited by Vivekananthan (2010), they stated that one key concern for the advertiser is whether the advertisement or commercial conveys the meaning intended. The receiver is viewed as very active, involved participant in the communication process whose ability and motivation to attend, comprehend and evaluate messages are high. If the consumer or the audience gets the message and understands it as the advertiser has it in mind, it is a great success for the advertiser. That understanding leads the person to prefer and purchase the brand. In other words, when an advertised message/information is rightly disseminated to the consumers in the intended manner, it leads to understanding, which could further lead consumers to purchase the product. Based on this view, the Sales Manager of Nigerian Breweries, opines that:

When Maltina drink was first introduced in the market environments, it was usually advertised every time in almost all television stations. This was done in order to promote the brand thereby giving consumers necessary information and other relevant details to the consumers.

Television as an influencing strategy is also able to keep the audience attention during show time of advertisement. This could be the reason why Maltina holds the Maltina Family Television Game Show every year, as a result of the advantages of vision and audio of the television, over other media, like the radio and newspapers. The television adverts have been ranked as the highest media channel for the effectiveness of Maltina as a brand and product to consumers. Scholars have identified television advertising as the best-selling media ever invented. For instance All-Share and Al Salaimeh, (2010) and Khan, Kamble and Khatri (2011), in their separate studies on Television Advertisement, found out that the television advertising is the most effective medium for creating awareness and making sales for a product. Khan et al (2011) believe that television advertisement has a potential advertising impact unmatched by any other media. On their part, All-Share and Al Salaimeh (2010) express the view that the television has been selected to be an advertising medium because it is the most commonly used and can reach a high rate of the audience in a short time, and also high rate of effective show frequency for the most targeted audience.

In the opinions of the one of the sales officer in the Sales department, another advertising strategy that is strong toward influencing the consumers is event sponsorship. He asserts that:

...for now, Maltina drink is no longer a new product in the market environment, so the rate at which we advertise the product has decreased. What we have ventured into now is massively into sponsoring events that would showcase our brand to our customers, thereby attracting potential customers while we support it with other media channels like billboards, radio advertisements, sales promotions, direct marketing, packaging, publicity, magazine adverts and newspaper adverts are very effective media channels for reaching the consumers.

This reveals that the advertising strategies of Nigerian breweries have been able to influence consumers purchasing decision. The finding is relevant to the Elaborative Likelihood theory which states that persuasive communications, like advertising messages, lead to persuasion by influencing consumers' attitudes. Cacioppo & Petty (1989) explain the concept of elaboration as the processing of relevant information, and with this theory suggests a differential processing response to persuasive communication. Elaboration is thus the effort we put in to make sense of an incoming stimulus in the light of what we already know (Sinclair & Barenblatt 1993:24). When the consumer thoroughly thinks and carefully deliberates the arguments and persuasive elements in the advertising message, high elaboration takes place. This has contributed immensely to promoting Nigerian breweries products especially Maltina drink.

Conclusion/Recommendation

The effectiveness of advertising is sometimes difficult to establish. However, this study has shown that advertising is positively and significantly related to brand building. Studies have shown that advertising possesses several positive potential more even than other elements like sales promotion, public relation, word of mouth, personal selling and direct marketing. Thus, advertising is an active tool and a useful strategy for building brands. This assertion is based on the role it has performed for Maltina product brand through the family game show – Maltina Dance All of Nigerian breweries plc. Hence, organization should establish appropriate means of designing and implementing promotional strategies in order to help attract existing and prospective consumers, drive sales and increase profits. Also, organizations need to

set advertising objectives. This will be the basic form which the success and failure of an advertising program can be measured. They should introduce other incentives which serve as below-the-line promotion such as key holder, caps, pens, books, bags, etc. that carry the company's name or the brand name. This will always remind the customers of the existence and importance of the company's products and services.

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