

Integrated Marketing Communication Program And Brand Performance In The Nigerian Telecommunications Industry

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ABSTRACT

Several years ago the theory and practices of business communication were discussed without considering the idea of integration as a realistic approach to reach a competitive planned position for the company. This study focuses on the impact of Integrated Marketing Communication program on brand performance in the Nigerian Telecommunications Industry. A cross-sectional survey research design method was employed. The sample objects were 130 staff and customers of the Nigerian Telecommunications Industry. A 16-item validated structured questionnaire served as the research instrument. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between variety of media, synergy of multiple media, integrated marketing communication message, channel planning and brand performance. It was concluded that variety of media influence brand performance. It will increase the capability of promoting organizations towards the development of alternative ways to communicate with target audience. It will help organization to maximize returns on their investments. The study recommends that Nigeria Telecommunications Firms should employ the advantages of media integration in each medium to enhance the contributions of all other media, and also that the used of synergy is greater than the sum total of their individual effects. Finally, the study has contributed to knowledge by provided a communication planning that recognizes the added value of comprehensive plan in evaluating the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines.

Keywords: Integrated Marketing Communication Programs, Brand Performance, Variety of Media, Synergy of Multiple Media, Integrated Marketing Communication Message.

Introduction

Many years ago, agencies and clients seem to believe that to deliver messages to people, it was adequate to use specific tool of communication mix. It was a common belief that it is obligatory to make use of particular tool to achieve specific communication effects on buyers. In this regard, clients were recommended to use advertising to create understanding, public relations to create interest and goodwill towards a brand, sales promotion to make urgent sales etc.

Potential customers were required to deal with a selection of functionally different and independent agencies to complete their communication requirements with their various audiences as communication abilities. Nowadays, clients seem to re-orient their communication away from mass media approaches to increased level of interaction with customers, the structural inadequacies of the marketing communications sector seem to have served to constrain them.

This appears to be the rationale why Integrated Marketing Communication was born. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) seems to emerge as a reaction to structural inadequacies and the realization of clients that their communication requirements can be achieved more resourcefully and effectively. In today ever changing environment of social networks, organizations require to be organized to directly execute holistic thinking for their marketing and communication strategy. It also appears to be necessary for organizations to make powerful impact on target audiences and markets, towards an increase in global competition.

It may be one of such step in the direction of an integrated approach to achieve efficiency in synergy. The Nigerian market place consists of an increasingly complex area of competition within a speedily changing atmosphere. Business is now getting internet based operations, portraying a charming picture of sophisticated and clustered market. Integrated Marketing Communication may not be only communication process, but also a process connected with brand and also makes them to have some favorable positive strong and distinct brand association in their memory. Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) as a strategic business process is used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated measurable persuasive brand communication programmes over time with customers, prospects and other targeted appropriate external and internal audience (Schultz and Kitchen 2002).

Statement of the problem

Several years ago the theory and practices of business communication where discussed without

considering the plan of integration as a realistic approach to reach a competitive planned position for the organization. Significant challenges to achieve optimal Integrated Marketing

Communication performance seems to be in existence and acting as barriers in way of effective Integrated Marketing Communication function in Nigeria.

Organization seems to ignore the use of variety of multiple media in Integrated Marketing Communication program, because they may be oblivious of its effect on brand performance. They appear to be uninformed that Integrated Marketing Communication can perform and lead to benefits and delivering the objective of the organization. Most organization see the integration of multiple media as a means for postponing actions, little do they know that Integration

Marketing Communication requires the teamwork and synchronization of different media to succeed.

They do not know that another level of Integrated Marketing Communication though integration of multiple media is about bringing together the communication tools. Integrated Marketing Communication brand messages is an insistent marketing plan that captures and uses a broad amount of customer information in setting and tracking marketing strategy. Many organizations seem not to be aware of this important function. They did not know that Integrated Marketing Communication facilitates the effectiveness of the overall marketing effort to evaluate brand messages.

Theoretical Consideration

Integrated Marketing Communication program

An amalgamation of all these promotional tools along with other components of marketing mix

to gain edge over competitor by knowing the right touch-point using to reach peak level of consumer satisfaction is referred to as Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) It is a term that emerged in the late 20th century regarding relevance of dependable brand messaging diagonally myriad marketing channels.

IMC is also a process that involves a dynamic series of progressive and interdependent steps, such as database building and management of consumer information, developing and planning messages to be delivered using a variety of channels, and evaluating and measuring synergistic brand communications programmes. The firm needs to understand the issues involved on how it has to plan, organize, execute, direct and manage the whole marketing communication program. All the elements are put on the table and the choice of

combination depends on a number of factors such as:

- ? Marketing objective of the organization
- ? Nature of target audience under focus
- ? State of the product in its product life cycle
- ? Resource availability to the organization
- ? Cost effectiveness of each of the tool
- ? Cost of media choices
- ? Type of tool being used by your competitors
- ? Competitors' reaction pattern to the organization's marketing communication drive (Picton and Broderick, 2001).

The Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) approach placed premium on the consistency

of messages, that by this, it posits that communication efforts of a company through its different products must project a unified voice. Though, IMC is gradually emerging as a natural evolution in marketing communication brought about by drastic changes in at least three main areas, which are:

- i) The market place;
- ii) The media and communications;
- iii) The consumers.

These changes have been driven primarily by advancement in information technology and caused a major shift from mass marketing, to product centered theories of marketing popularized in the 1950s and 1960s to the more customer-centered, database-driven interactive and measurable approaches of integrated communications (Schultz, 2003).

Factors Influencing the Integrated Marketing Communication

According to Schultz (1998) IMC does not just rely only on integration of promotional mix, but greatly depends on recruitment, marketing budget and skills. It is assuring that only combination of promotional mix does not affect the IMC, but infrastructure of the business should support.

Despite the good employees and skills, marketing budget is most important, but if there is lack of budget the entire effort turn out to be useless. Kitchen, Brignel, Tao, and Jones (2004) stated that nature of business, marketing development and required investment by business have great influence on IMC. According to Vargas (2005) nature of the product, nature of the market, stage in product-life-cycle, price and funds obtainable for the promotion have major influence.

Brand Performance

A brand is defined as any name, term, sign, jingle, packaging, logo, design and combination of all which differentiate the product or service with other products or services. Performance is often used as a dependent variable in marketing literature (Tran Quan, 2006). The performance of brand highlights how triumphant a brand is in the market (Ho and Merrilees, 2008). If a brand has a main market or losses that or it is developing in a region, the sale will be largely affected (Aaker, 1996). In other words, because customers already have opinions and awareness about a brand, any part of the marketing program is likely to be more successful for the same expenditure level (Ibrahim, Mohammed and Nasim, 2012). Brand performance means that the brand value has to allow concern and on height of that, the brand has to give a considerable involvement to the triumph of a business as a whole.

Variety of Media and Brand Performance

The understanding that the strategic integration of the different communication functions rather than having them function separately would bring clients and customers many added benefit in their purchasing. Advocates of Integrated Marketing Communication believe that IMC will aids organization to maximize their returns on investments. The move towards Integrated Marketing Communication reflects an alteration by marketers to a changing atmosphere with respect to consumer's technology and the media. In today world many consumers are tired of being bombarded with different sales messages.

These factors in the views of Belch and Belch, (2004) are capable of promoting marketers towards the improvement of different ways to communicate with target audience. The Nigerian

Telecommunications appears to be a fast growing business in Nigeria, there is a concern on how the industry is going to achieve their goals. This suggestion brought about the variety of media that can be used by the organization to communicate the necessary information about their products and services. Thus we hypothesize that:

H1: There is statistically significant relationship between variety of media and brand

performance.

Synergy of Multiple Media and Brand Performance

The concept of media synergy has been around for years. Termed cross-media research in the last century, the goal has constantly been to resolve the further impact of a grouping of media forms/messages for the same brand being attended to

Results

Table 1: Correlation Matrix among the Dimensions of Integrated Marketing Communication Programs and Brand Performance.

	VARIETY OF MEDIA	SYNERGY OF MULTIPLE MEDIA	INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION MESSAGES	BRAND PERFORMANCE
VARIETY OF MEDIA	1			
SYNERGY OF MULTIPLE MEDIA	.488**	1		
INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION MESSAGES	.566**	.539**	1	
BRAND PERFORMANCE	.252**	.374**	.357**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analysis of field survey, 2019

The correlation matrix analysis as shown in the above table 1 reported that variety of media exhibited positive correlation with synergy of multiple media ($r = .488^{**}$, $P < .01$) integrated marketing communication messages ($r = .566^{**}$, $P < .01$) Brand Performance ($r = .252^{**}$, $P < .01$).

Similarly, synergy of multiple media was

positively significantly correlated with integrated marketing communication messages, and Brand Performance. Also integrated marketing communication messages displayed positive and significant positive relationship with Brand Performance.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis of variety of media, synergy of multiple media and integrated marketing communication messages on brand Performance.

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8.665	1.588		5.457	.963
1 VARIETY OF MEDIA	.262	.105	.258	2.611	.000
SYNERGY OF MULTIPLE MEDIA	.252	.101	.254	2.499	.014
INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION MESSAGES	.202	.100	.218	2.022	.045

a. Dependent Variable: BRANDPERFORMANCE

Source: Analysis of field survey, 2019

Table 3: Model Summary.
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.417 ^a	.174	.154	1.8254

Source: Analysis of field survey, 2019

Discussion

The study is focused on the impact of integrated marketing communication programs on brand performance in a telecommunication firms in Delta State, Nigeria.

The results of the correlation analysis involving all indicators of integrated marketing communication programs exhibited an overwhelming positive correlation coefficient values among the variables. This is indicative that they are appropriate dimensions and measures of integrated marketing communication programs. The results from the multiple Regression analysis (MRA) recorded the impact of integrated marketing communication programs on brand performance.

The three constructs of integrated marketing communication programs: variety of media ($\beta = .258, P < 0.01$), synergy of multiple media ($\beta = .254, P < 0.01$) and integrated marketing communication message ($\beta = .218, P < 0.01$) exhibited statistically significant positive effect on brand performance. The result provided support for the H1 test result which indicated that there is statistically significant positive relationship between variety of media and brand performance

($P(\text{cal}) 0.005 < P(\text{crit}) 0.05$). This is also in support of Belch and Belch (2004) stated that consumers are tired of being bombarded with different sales messages. These factors are capable of promoting marketers towards the development of alternative ways to communicate with target audience. This implies that variety of media enhances brand performance.

Similarly, the findings indicate that synergy of multiple media is found to have significant positive effect with brand performance ($\beta = .254, P < 0.01$). The findings provided support for

the result of H2 which stated that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between synergy of multiple media and brand performance. This further supports the findings of Schultz et al (2011) that Media synergy arises when the combined effect or impact of a number of media activities is different from the sum of their individual effects on individual consumers. Thus, synergy is an occurrence in which the whole is not always exactly equal to the sum of the parts, but could be greater than, or lesser than that sum. This implies that synergy of multiple media influences brand performance. Furthermore, result of the regression matrix analysis revealed that integrated marketing communication message has positive effect on brand performance ($\beta = .218, P < 0.01$).

This finding provides support for result of H3 test which indicated that integrated marketing

communication message has statistically significant relationship with brand performance. This is in agreement with Schultz (2004) believed that the source of a message has three particular characteristics. These are: the level of perceived credibility as seen in terms of perceived objectivity and expertise; the degree to which the source is regarded as attractive and message recipients are motivated to develop a positive perception; and the degree of power that the source is believed to possess. This also implies that IMC message enhances brand performance.

Conclusion

In the light of the findings of this study, the following conclusions emerge. The findings showed

that variety of media, synergy of multiple media, and integrated marketing communication message are all good dimensions of integrated marketing communication programs, that could enhance the brand performance in the Nigerian Telecommunications industry, thereby generate distinctiveness to the organization amidst rivals in the industry. It was concluded that variety of media influence brand performance. It will increase the capability of promoting marketers towards the development of alternative ways to communicate with target audience. It will help organization to maximize returns on their investments.

The study concluded that synergy of multiple media influence brand performance. Organization should extend their impact of sequential media messages in order to be delivered by multiple media forms which are audiences exposed to a sequence of advertising messages.

It is also concluded that integrated marketing communication message has influence on brand performance. Integrated marketing communication set of center messages used in any campaign should first be determined and then deployed as an integrated whole across the communication mix in the organization.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study and the conclusion, the study recommends as follows:

The Nigeria Telecommunications Industry should have variety of media to diversify their communication in order to have effective output. Nigeria Telecommunications should advance the advantages of media integration in each medium to enhance the contributions of all other media, and that the used in synergy to be much greater than the sum total of their individual effects.

The study also recommended that integrated marketing communication message are messages that

is refer to brand concepts, ideas or associations, and all other values or perceptions that marketers transmit to customers, while incentives are short-term offers or rewards to consumers for having done something of value to both the firm and the consumer.

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