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E-MARKETING IN NIGERIA: BENEFITS, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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Abstract

E-marketing is a marketing philosophy that has transformed the practice of marketing from traditional means to online platforms. It has changed the way and manner firms relate with their customers. Globally, there are variations in the practice and growth of e-marketing. As such, the paper discussed the benefits and challenges of e-marketing in Nigeria. It also examined strategies that can be adopted to enhance e-marketing by reviewing some models with the aim of drawing inferences and a direction for the growth and development of e-marketing in Nigeria. Content analysis was applied by reviewing literature on e-marketing. The paper indicates that the benefits of e-marketing range from global reach to new product development while the major challenges of e-marketing identified are inadequate Internet Infrastructure, cost of getting connected, unreliable power supply, inadequate number of knowledgeable staff and perceived lack of security. Moreover, e-marketing strategy framework comprising the Marketing Mix model, 4S model, Cox and Koelzer model as well as Granitz and Greene model were discussed. The paper concluded that Nigeria needs to improve her information and communications technology especially accessibility to internet infrastructure and security so that businesses and customers can avail themselves of the benefits of e-marketing.

Keywords: *E-marketing, Internet infrastructure, Strategy, Marketing mix, Security, Information technology, Marketing concept, Connectivity.*

INTRODUCTION

Advances in information technology have revolutionized marketing operations and business systems globally. Several businesses are adopting the Internet and other electronic media in conducting their marketing operations. This has led to the growth and development of e-marketing as a new marketing philosophy. E-marketing is a modern business practice involved with the marketing of goods, services, information and ideas through the Internet and other electronic means (El-Gohary, 2010). In the view of Strauss and Frost (2001) e-marketing is the use of electronic data and applications for planning and executing the conception, distribution, promotion and pricing of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals. Smith and Chaffey (2005) opined that it involves the use of digital media to manage marketing operations including the management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management systems. Generally, e-marketing involves the application of the Internet and related digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives.

In today's internet age, the practice of the marketing concept has been redefined. Building an online presence has become imperative for all businesses to be competitive.

With the popularity of personal computers, mobile smart phones and improved access to internet service facilities, most business organizations in all sectors of the economy (banks, insurance companies, hotels, airlines, education service providers etc.) have joined the online business community and have adopted the internet as a strategic tool in their daily marketing activities. E-marketing is gradually gaining prominence as a tool for gaining competitive advantage and this has implications for marketing practice in Nigeria. That is why Weihrich and Koontz (2005) opined that to be successful in the 21stcentury, firms must take advantage of information technology especially the internet. Agbonifoh, Ogwo, Nnolim, and Nkamnebe (2007) also noted that it is becoming obvious that nations, firms and consumers who continue to ignore the internet would soon discover the difficulty of surviving outside the internet as it is redefining the relationship between exchange parties and will continue to determine the whole of the exchange mechanism.

It has been observed that e-marketing is growing rapidly in developed and some developing economies but it is lagging behind specifically in most African countries as a result of accessibility, low connectivity and poor infrastructural development. It is however important to point out that there is rapid expansion of internet access in Nigeria (International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2017) but most rural areas are yet to be connected. Where there is connectivity in some rural communities, it has been observed that accessibility is still a challenge (Nyirenda-Jere & Biru, 2015). The effect of this has been highlighted as being responsible for the slow growth of e-marketing.

In this paper, our aim is to review the current situation of e-marketing in Nigeria given that there are different levels of development of e-marketing in all countries. As noted by Rahayu and Day (2015) the use of electronic platforms in business practices differ from developed countries to developing countries. To achieve the aim, the paper discussed the benefits and challenges of e-marketing in Nigeria and examined strategies that can be adopted to enhance e-marketing by reviewing some models so as to draw inferences and a direction for the growth and development of e-marketing in Nigeria. This is imperative considering the consistent growth in internet penetration in Nigeria since 2002 and the increasing growth in the adoption of e-commerce, internet banking and social media marketing by businesses in Nigeria (Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC), 2018).

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

Most times, the term e-marketing is used synonymously with e-business, e-commerce and internet marketing which is incorrect because even though they are related, they are different in terms of scope (El-Gohary, 2010). E-marketing has a broader scope than internet marketing. On the other hand, e-business and e-commerce have a wider and broader scope than e-marketing. In terms of scope, the order is e-business, e-commerce, e-marketing and internet marketing (Gilmore, Gallagher, & Henry, 2007).

Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, Mayer, and Johnston (2006) referred to e-business as all electronically mediated information exchanges, both within an organization and with external stakeholders, supporting the range of business processes. It is the use of digital technology to manage a range of business processes such as buying and selling, marketing activities, business communication, research and development. E-commerce on the other hand refers to the buying and selling of products and the exchange of information through electronic networks. It allows customers to shop or perform transactions year round, 24 hours a day from almost any location and they can make a choice from several firms or products. In addition, for digitized products, e- commerce allows for quick delivery. Internet marketing refers to marketing on the internet, e-mail and wireless media while e-marketing includes all of that in addition to the management of digital customer data and electronic customer relationship management. It presents a virtual marketplace within which firms promote, provide sales support for their products and services, manage customer data and maintain one-to-one relationship with customers. E-Marketing encompasses all the activities a business conducts through the internet and other electronic media with the aim of attracting customers, retaining customers and developing its brand identity. It uses a range of technologies to help connect businesses to their customers. It enables a firm to interact more closely with customers and to promote better customer relationship management. However, not all businesses easily adopt it due to certain factors.

Factors Influencing the Adoption of E-Marketing

In spite of Nigeria's fast-emerging economic status, the adoption and implementation of e-marketing is still behind many other developing nations even in Africa (Faloye, 2014). E-marketing is still at its infancy, and there are still a lot of potentials to be exploited. From extant literature on e-marketing practice in Nigeria, it has been observed that various firms have different approaches to the market (Gilmore et al., 2007). E-marketing serves as a complementary practice, and a facilitator to traditional marketing practices (Coviello, Brodie, Brookes, & Palmer, 2003). Therefore, the orientation of the firm towards IT is an important factor in the adoption of e-marketing. The authors noted that technology comes first, and then the ability to market follows. It was noted that the role IT plays in an organisation influences the practice of e-marketing. E-marketing can only drive the activities of the firm if IT plays a transforming role.

Sheth and Sharma (2005) studied the opportunities and issues in e-marketing adoption and growth, and they found that the growth of e-marketing is largely affected by two factors - the level of infrastructural development and the building of marketing institutions. In their categorization of countries, Nigeria falls under the category of countries with low infrastructural development and marketing institutions. Infrastructure development refers to roads, telecommunication, legislative bodies, and a good justice systems. Marketing institutional development on the other hand refers to distribution channels as well as efficient communication system. The stage of development of these factors in a country influences the adoption and growth of e-marketing.

Tornatzky and Fleischer (1990) examined the factors influencing the adoption of e-marketing from technology-organization-environment perspective. This was improved upon by Rahayu and Day (2015). The initial framework identified three aspects of a firm's context that can influence the adoption of technological innovations. They include the technological context, the organizational context and the environmental context.

The technological context includes the internal and external technologies that are relevant to the firm. Technologies may include both equipment as well as processes. This has to do with existing technological resources available to the firm. A firm that has IT infrastructure, IT expertise, electronic know-how is more likely to adopt e-marketing. Coviello et al. (2003) found that the adoption of e-marketing in a firm is proportional to the firm's orientation towards information technology. In their study of 160 firms, they found that the lower the application of IT in the firm, the lower the adoption of e-marketing. Firms either use IT to reinforce or transform their marketing activities.

The organizational context refers to the characteristics and resources of the firm, including the firm's size, degree of centralization, degree of formalization, managerial structure, human resources, amount of slack resources and linkages among employees. Large firms have several advantages over small firms in terms of technology adoption. For example, large firms tend to have more slack resources to facilitate adoption and are more capable of bearing the high risks associated with the initial substantial investment required for e-marketing projects. In addition, the broader the scope of a business, the greater the demand for IT investment and so the more likely such a firm will adopt e-marketing. This is because greater scope leads to higher internal coordination costs and since business digitization can reduce internal coordination costs, firms with greater scope are motivated to adopt e-marketing.

The environmental context includes the size and structure of the industry, the firm's competitors, the macroeconomic context and the regulatory environment. If in a particular industry, majority of the firms have adopted e-marketing, it is most likely that other firms will be influenced in order to avoid competitive decline. In addition, consumer readiness which can be measured as the combination of internet penetration and consumer willingness to be connected is also a factor. Internet penetration measures the diffusion of PCs and the internet in the population of a country. If the level of readiness is high, it may encourage firms to adopt e-marketing (Coviello et al., 2003; Singhal, 2016).

Rahayu and Day (2015)in their study based on the TOE framework, included the individual context as one of the factors that influence the adoption of e-marketing. The individual context refers to owners' innovativeness, owners' IT experience and owners' IT knowledge and expected benefits from e-marketing. The benefits that an individual or a particular manager expects to derive from going online will also influence adoption. Individuals that believe that there are several benefits to be enjoyed by going online are more likely to adopt e-marketing.

These factors present both constraints and opportunities for the practice of e-marketing. Thus, they influence the way a firm sees the need for, searches for and adopts new ways of marketing its products.

BENEFITS OF E-MARKETING

Since the privatization of telecommunication industry and banking consolidation in 2000, followed by the implementation of the cashless policy in 2013, the chances of adopting e-commerce by businesses in Nigeria and by extension e-marketing has increased (Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), 2014). There has been a steady growth of internet users in Nigeria since 2013. The Nigerian communication commission (NCC) in its 2018 report revealed that internet users increased from about 50 million users to 93 million. Although the internet in Nigeria is widespread, its utilization resulting from e-marketing is not well documented. However, the government policy actions on achieving a cashless society can be considered as a major boost to e-marketing in Nigeria.

The adoption of e-marketing has been found to improve firm performance (Sheikh, Shahzad, & ku Ishak, 2017). Gilmore et al. (2007) pointed out that e-marketing provides a lot of economic benefits as an alternative channel for businesses to reach a wider audience. This is because e-marketing has placed a whole new set of capabilities in the hands of businesses and consumers. It enables a firm to create new services, expand its market, increase visibility and responsiveness to customers and to strengthen business relationships (Coviello et al., 2003). It gives businesses of any type and size specific benefits which include:

- **Global reach:** Information technology offers a whole range of new technologies to increase marketing activities on a global basis. For example, a website can reach anyone in the world who has internet access. This allows a business to find new markets and compete globally. It expands the marketplace from local to national and international markets. By creating and maintaining a website, the business can lists its products, services and other information of interest which customers can access globally and thereby promote their businesses and products worldwide.
- **Lower cost:** A properly planned and effectively targeted e-marketing can reach the right customers at a much lower cost than traditional marketing methods. It offers cost savings, particularly in the areas of transactional costs, customer service, digital media channels, print and distribution.
- **24-hour marketing:** With e-marketing, customers can obtain information on products and make purchases even if the physical premises of a firm are closed or if the firm does not have physical premises at all. It is the expectation of customers that a firm's offering should be available 24 hours a day without interruption.
- **Personalization:** E-marketing enables a firm to collect and store information about its customers and identify them on individual level. If customer database is linked to the website, then whenever they visit the site, the firm can greet them with targeted offers. The more they buy, the more the firm can refine their profile and market to them effectively.
- **One-to-one marketing:** E-marketing allows firms to relate and react to individual customer demands and to reach their customers who want to know about their products and services instantly. It also enables customers to talk directly to the firm.
- **Increased interactivity:** E-marketing also offers a much higher degree of interaction. It allows a firm to create interactive campaigns using chat, music, graphics and videos. Through two-way communication, interactive games or quizzes, a firm can engage its audience and give them greater involvement and control over their web experience.
- **Increased ability to track results:** E-marketing makes it easier to measure how effective marketing programmes are. It allows a firm to obtain detailed information about customers' responses to advertisement through the use of methods such as pay per click or pay per action.
- **New product development:** The internet provides opportunities for learning about products and for new product development. It can be used as a relatively low cost method of collecting marketing research about customer perception of products which can be used for designing new products and improving existing ones.

Challenges of E-Marketing

Despite the relevance and benefits of information and communication technology, its growth and development as well as its implementation in terms of e-marketing, e-commerce and e-business especially in Nigeria is still faced with some challenges (Agwu & Murray, 2014; Chiemeke & Longe, 2007). When compared with Asia, Europe and America, Nigeria is still lagging behind. According to Dlodlo and Dhurup (2010) some of the factors responsible for this include:

- **Inadequate Internet Infrastructure:** The major platform for e-marketing is the internet. Currently, the level of accessibility to the internet in Nigeria is still low especially in most rural areas where majority of businesses do not have access to internet facilities and thus are unable to engage in e-marketing.

- **Cost of getting connected:** Availability of computer and fast speed internet connection are prerequisites to the practice of e-marketing. The cost of getting connected is high especially for small and medium businesses. The high cost of accessing internet services is also a major factor in the adoption of e-marketing in Nigeria. In addition, the cost of maintenance is high.
- **Unreliable power supply:** The issue of unstable power supply is a major challenge to e-marketing in Nigeria. The gadgets required for e-marketing are powered by electricity which is not readily available.
- **Inadequate number of knowledgeable staff:** Limited staff expertise caused by a general shortage of highly skilled workers and insufficient training is a major barrier to the growth of e-marketing. Computer literacy is still growing in Nigeria.
- **Perceived lack of security:** Perceived lack of security of online transactions is also a major hindrance to the diffusion of e-marketing among businesses and customers. Security involves protection against fraud and hacking of personal information which can provide third person an easy access to information and its misuse. It is important to understand and address security concerns in order to leverage the potentials of ICT in delivering e-marketing applications.

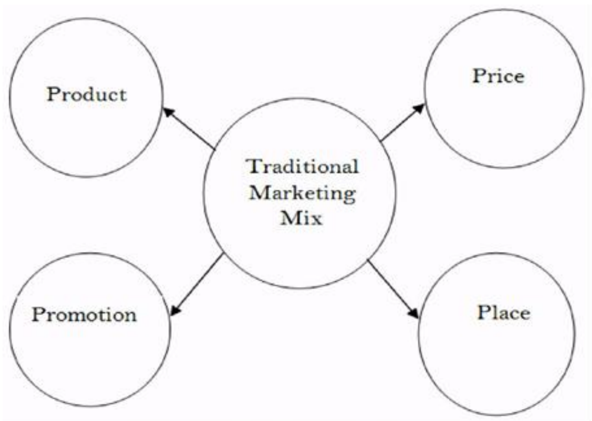
E-MARKETING STRATEGY

To make the best out of e-marketing practice in Nigeria, the paper reviewed some models as follows:

The Marketing Mix Model

The marketing mix is the combination of marketing variables that a firm puts together to best satisfy its target market. The term "marketing mix" was coined in 1948 by James Culliton, but was popularized in the 1960s by Jerome McCarthy who put forth four variables, all beginning with the letter P, that describe the four avenues that a firm should take in order to successfully market a product. These 4Ps are product, price, place (distribution) and promotion. The marketing mix elements or 4Ps can be varied by marketers to satisfy their customers. E-marketing provides many new opportunities for the marketer to vary these traditional marketing mix elements. The four elements are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Traditional marketing mix model



Source: *McCarthy (1960).*

Product Strategy

A product is a bundle of benefits that satisfy the needs of consumers and organizations and for which they are willing to exchange money or other items of value (Kotler, 2003). Product as an element of the marketing mix also refers to the characteristics of the product such as colour, taste, style, product guarantee, package, design and size. The first strategy in product decision is to develop a peculiar product and the key to developing a peculiar product is uniqueness. The product should fit the need consumers want it for, it should work and it should be what the consumers are expecting to get. If the firm offers several products, the products should be reviewed in terms of web-product compatibility so as to choose the products that are most suitable for online business and to put them first on the web page. Web-product compatibility is the degree of synergy between the characteristics of a product and the internet.

E-marketing provides opportunities for varying the product online. Online product decisions can be divided into decisions affecting the core product and the extended product. The core product refers to the main product purchased by the consumer to fulfill their needs while the extended product refers to additional services and benefits that are built around the core of the product (Chaffey et al., 2006). For some firms, there may be options for new digital products which will typically be information products that can be delivered over the web such as books, newspapers, magazines, games, music, movies, software or financial products. The internet also introduces options for mass customization of products. In mass customization of products, firms offer tailored versions of the product to individual customers or group of customers and the customer takes a more active role in product design. The internet can be used to vary the extended product through endorsement, awards, testimonies, warranties, guarantees, customer service and incorporating tools to help users during their selection and use of the product.

Pricing Strategy

Price is the exchange value of a product (Bearden, Ingram, & LaForge, 2007). The product should always be seen as representing good value for money. This does not necessarily mean it should be the cheapest available because at times customers are usually happy to pay a little more for something that works really well for them. E-marketing has implication for pricing in organizations. For example, there is the issue of price transparency which enables potential customers to compare prices before making a purchase decision. As a result, there is the tendency to have decreased prices for products sold over the internet. In e-marketing, there are several approaches to pricing such as:

- **Status quo pricing:** This is when the firm transfers its existing prices online. This implies that the firm has to charge the same price for both offline and online transactions.
- **Differential pricing:** This is the most common approach in online pricing. It basically means that a firm that goes online would offer lower prices when selling online compared to the prices offered offline. Some firms use low price so as to increase their customer base online.
- **Price discrimination:** This is when identical products are priced differently for different types of customer, markets or buying situations. The ability to customize products combined with the ability of firms to access substantial information about prospective buyers such as demographics, preferences and past shopping behaviour is greatly improving their ability to carry out price discrimination.

- **Dynamic pricing:** This is a pricing strategy in which prices are not fixed but are flexible. Although such strategies are available in traditional markets, it is one of the most important gifts to the internet. When any of the variables affecting pricing decisions change, the price may also change. It requires accurate pricing information to be effective.

The firm has to take a decision on the pricing strategy to employ for its online marketing. It should be noted however that price is only one of the variables that consumers used to make a choice, they also consider familiarity with the brand, trust and perceived service levels (Chaffey et al., 2006). Therefore, firms should highlight specific features of the product that will be relevant to customers in their decision making such as quality, reliability, delivery etc.

Distribution Strategy

Distribution is the element of the marketing mix that involves delivering products to customers in line with demand and minimizing the cost of inventory, transport and storage (Kotler, 2003). It can also be seen as the process and procedure by which products are made available at the right place and at the right time. Online distribution occurs when a firm digitizes its distribution processes such that customers can download the product online. However, this is only possible when the product is a digital product or soft product like books, newspapers, magazines, games, music, movies, software or financial products.

In addition, with e-marketing, a firm can disintermediate, that is, bypass channel members and sell directly to consumers (Viljoen, Roberts-Lombard, & Jooste, 2015). By using the internet, a firm can sell directly to customers and provide customer support online. In traditional distribution, indirect channel members include wholesalers, retailers, agents and brokers. In disintermediation, the traditional intermediaries are either eliminated or by-passed. There is a growing disintermediation process in many industries due to the advent of internet that allows firms to directly interact with customers. For example, in many industries such as airlines, insurance and some manufacturing industries, the disintermediation process is fast changing the nature of marketing and consequently making relationship marketing more popular. Databases and direct marketing tools provide firms the means to individualize their marketing efforts.

When disintermediation is not properly managed, it can lead to channel conflicts. Therefore, in some cases, instead of selling directly to customers, the firms will re-intermediate by engaging new online intermediaries to replace the role of traditional intermediaries (Hanson, 2000). Examples of re-intermediaries are online retailers such as Amazon, Konga, Jumai etc. At times, there is need to limit the number of re-intermediaries and so there will be counter-mediation. It is the process whereby firms create barriers to entry for new intermediaries in order to counter or reduce re-intermediation. This can be done using rules and policies to prevent them from distributing the product.

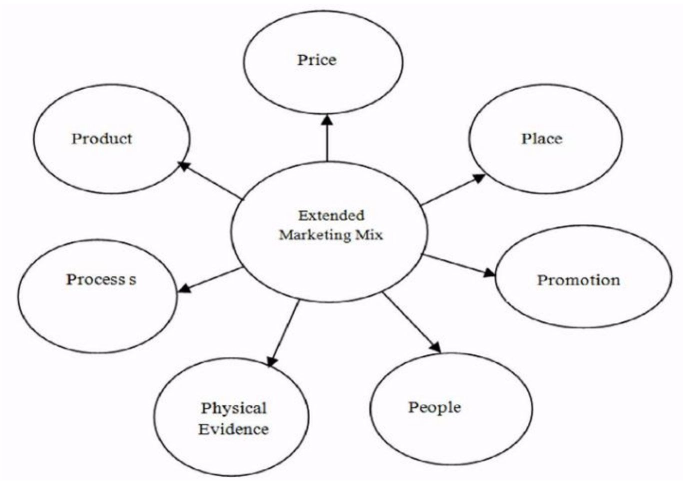
Promotion Strategy

Promotion refers to all techniques used to provide information for the consumer about the firm and its product in order to induce them to buy (Bearden et al., 2007). As an element of the marketing mix, promotion is very important as it communicates product, ideas and information to target audience so as to boost sales volume, reposition the product and gain competitive advantage.

Although businesses will continue to make use of traditional promotional tools, such as off-line advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations, e-marketing adds a unique dimension to promotion. The adoption of e-marketing enables firms to promote their products to the public through banner advertisements, online sales promotions, public relations, direct marketing, e-mails and testimonials. Creating word of mouth or buzz about a product is increasingly the objective of marketers online. This is particularly important since peer-to-peer referrals are viewed by many people as their most trusted source when selecting a product. These tools should be used to put across the firm's message to the correct audience in the manner they would most like to hear, whether it be informative or appealing to their emotions. With e-marketing, promotion can be updated at any time with minimal cost, it can reach very large number of potential buyers both locally and globally, it is quicker and easier to deliver messages to consumers, it is interactive and firms can effectively use the convergence of text, audio, graphics and animation. When using e-mail for promotion, the firm needs to set-up guidelines for its e-mails. It should be defined and customized by the firm so that people are able to recognize e-mails from it at a glance. Spamming which refers to the behaviour of sending out information to people who did not ask for them should be used with caution. The bulk distribution of unsolicited and often unwanted e-mail has been on the increase over the years. The public do not like firms overloading their e-mails with intrusive e-mail advertisement.

Due to the fact that the traditional 4Ps approach to marketing did not adequately address the marketing of a service, a need developed for the marketing mix to include how a service should be marketed. The change came about because services are different from goods in that they are intangible, perishable, inseparable and heterogeneous and as a result, different strategies need to be considered. As such, three new Ps often referred to as the service elements, were invented by Booms and Bitner in 1980 and they include people, physical evidence and process. A combination of the traditional 4Ps and these three service elements is referred to as the extended marketing mix as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Extended marketing mix model



Source: *Booms and Bitner (1980).*

An assessment of the additional *SPs* by Chaffey et al. (2006) indicated that they are also relevant in e-marketing as follows:

People

The people element of the marketing mix relates to how a firm's staff interacts with customers during sales and after-sales. It includes customer service representatives, sales people or anyone a customer may deal with that represents the firm. All firms are reliant on the people who run them from front line sales staff to the Managing Director. Having the right people is essential because they are as much a part of the firm's offering as the products being offered.

In e-marketing, the people element refers to staff that reply customers through telephone calls, e-mails or online chat enquiries. Therefore, firms need to set up an online call center as soon as they go online. This is necessary so as to answer customers' questions fast and reliably and also to solve their problems in an instant. As such, firms should provide customers with contacts which can be phone numbers or e-mails as well as a support request. The firm should also ensure that the contacts are functional. There is no point having phone numbers that will never go through when customers use them or having e-mails and support request that are never responded to. Such practices can ruin the e-marketing efforts of an organization. Usually, the best practice is to have automatic message acknowledgement which should indicate when an enquiry will be responded to.

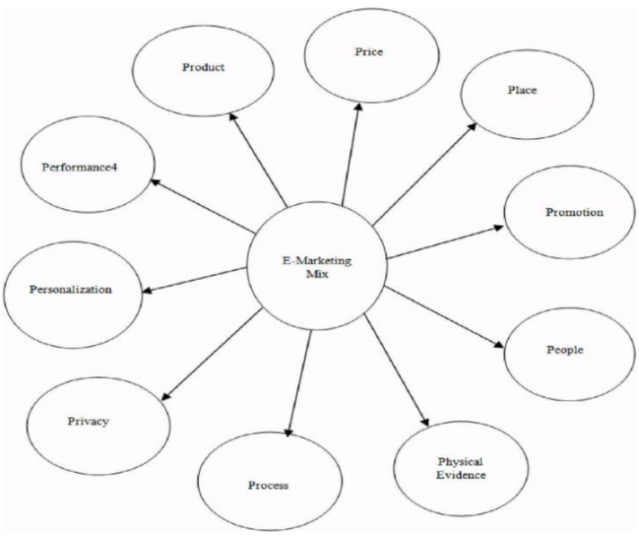
Physical Evidence

Physical evidence refers to the tangible expression of the firm and its product. All products include some physical elements even if the bulk of what the customer is paying for is intangible. In e-marketing, physical evidence refers to the customer's experience of the firm through the website and associated support system. Website is the customers' main access to online firms and to attain a successful transaction.The physical evidence includes information content, website appearance, design, ease of use and availability. Information should be presented in a way that everyone is able to get the message within very short time and with little effort.

Process

Process refers to the methods and procedures firms use to achieve all marketing functions such as new product development, promotion, sales and customer service. The restructuring of the firm and channel structures described for the product, price, place and promotion all require new processes to be performed. It deals with customer service and a firm's ability to offer a service, handle complaints etc. When these are clearly defined and efficient, it boosts customer confidence in the firm's ability to handle any issue.

Figure: E-marketing mix model



Source: *Gary (2010).*

With the advent of the Internet and e-marketing, some authors are now considering additional Ps or marketing mix elements (Chai, 2009; Gary, 2010) such as privacy, personalization and performance as shown in Figure 3.

Privacy

In many parts of the world, people have the right against unsanctioned invasion of privacy by the government, corporations and individuals. This is important for marketers to understand given that the Internet is global. The Internet has introduced a number of potential privacy risks thai continue to impact on individuals. Firstly, is the security of performed transactions. Firms should ensure that no third party is in position to access a component of a developing transaction. Critical information is being submitted when buying online (such as credit card number) and the customer is exposed to major risks. Therefore, the firm must gain customer's trust in terms of secured payments. Secondly, is the issue of security concerns about the data collected and stored which contains details of customers. At times, e-mail lists are stolen and phishing practices are used tc steal individual's user names, passwords and credit card information. A marketer must prevent third parties from accessing the database and must cooperate with the IT department in order to be aware of the systems' security level. Firms need to transmit clear and convincing, persuasive messages on security issues to their customers when the need arises.

Some governments are getting more involved in regulating online practices that infringe on individual's privacy. Many countries have privacy laws that protect individuals' personal information stored in customer relationship management (CRM), online stores and e-mail marketing databases. It is in the best interest of marketers to develop a good privacy policy along with its implementation through procedures and governance that affords protections to their customers, prospects and web site visitors. Increasingly, people will not engage with a firm that does not protect their private information and is not clear how they will use the information they are provided. Therefore, firms should have privacy policy that is linked to their website.

Personalization

Personalization is the practice of dynamically tailoring a firm's website to the needs of each user. Segmentation and targeting have long been the goal of marketers. Good segmentation allows the use of targeted messaging that is relevant to groups of people or even individuals. E-mail car be personalized with individual's contact information. Personalized web site content can be served to an individual based on their history and profile. Also, data capture forms filled out during registrations, for example, when opening a bank account; create databases that enable segmentation of individuals across a host of attributes useful to marketers for personalizing their communications.

Performance

Performance involves performing the online service dependably and accurately. The fact thai e-services are delivered over electronic platforms pose some challenges to firms. First of all, the direct contact between service employees and customers is missing and secondly the service delivery setting is completely changed. Therefore, the purpose the customer wants to achieve bj going online should be fulfilled and also reliable. Reliability refers to the consistency ol performance and dependability of electronic services. In the virtual marketplace, it is important tc make customers to trust that the firm is going to perform what it promises to deliver.

4S Model

The 4S model provides guidelines for managing and maintaining online presence. Developing a successful e-marketing strategy is an essential part of online success. It is needed to provide consistent direction for a firm's e-marketing activities so that they can be integrated with its marketing objectives and its overall business objectives. The 4S model by Constantinides (2002' offers a comprehensive, integral approach on managing the online presence. This requires the identification of strategic objectives, classification of the potential competitors and customers of the site, assessment of the degree of readiness of the company for e-marketing and recognition of the co-operation with other Internet partners outside the organization. The model can be useful tc firms in Nigeria intending to employ e-marketing. The steps are classified into four which include Scope, Site, Synergy and System.

Scope

The content of this element is primarily strategic and it outlines the decisions to be made on four areas. The strategic and operational objectives of the online venture, the market definition including measuring the market potential and the identification/classification of the potential competitors, visitors and future trends, the degree of readiness of the organization for creative ideas as basis for the online marketing activities and the strategic role of e-marketing for the organization. The major aspect is the identification of e -marketing objectives. This defines what the firm wants to achieve through the e-marketing programme. It sets the reasons why the firm wants to go online and also allows it to estimate and monitor the progress of online marketing activities. It also provides an incentive to focus on critical areas and formulate strategies to help achieve intended objectives. Different businesses may develop different e-marketing objectives depending on their individual circumstances.

Site

The web site is the company—customer interface, the prime source of customer experience and therefore the most important communication element of e-marketing. In online marketplace, the web site is the virtual product display, promotional material, price catalogue and sales / distribution point. It is therefore the functional platform of communication, interaction and transaction with the web customer. The major tasks of the site include communicating and promoting the e-marketing programme, providing company information to customers and stakeholders, effectively communicating the firm's physical or virtual promotional activities, providing customer service and helpdesk functionality in order to enhance customer loyalty and retention, providing sales leads and customer/market data, allowing customers to communicate and interact with the firm as well as creating online content and allowing direct sales and facilitating online payments (transactional sites). Maintaining the functionality and friendliness of a website is a delicate process which depends not only on available funds and technological options but also on good knowledge of the potential customer's motives, needs, expectations and behaviour with respect to online transactions. Special attention must be placed on aspects like the site find ability and speed, keeping in mind the average user's skills, available bandwidth and other technical limitations.

Synergy

Synergy is the integrating processes necessary for realizing the virtual organization's objectives. Such synergies can develop between the virtual and the physical organization as well as between the virtual organization and third parties. This synergy factor embraces a wide range of issues divided into three categories: The Front Office, the Back Office and the Third Parties. Front Office integration is integration with the physical marketing strategy and marketing activities. Integration into the existing support operations is necessary for the online firm in order to be able to provide the fulfillment and Back Office support expected by web customers. Back Office integration is integration of the website with organizational processes, legacy systems and databases while third party integration creates networks of partners who will assist the commercial, logistics and other site activities. These partnerships can increase the exposure of the online organization in the web marketplace by allowing online customers to locate and easily access the site.

System

System identifies the technological issues as well as the site servicing issues to be addressed by the firm. The main areas where the system-related decisions are to be made include website administration, maintenance and service, web server hosting and choice of the Internet Service Provider (ISP), site construction, content management, site security, transaction functionality, system backup. The site technical management must regularly identify and evaluate new technologies and new available products that could upgrade the site performance, enhance the customer experience and effectuate operational economies. Technical problems and system failures must be quickly addressed with minimum operational disruption.

Cox and Koelzer Model

Cox and Koelzer (2004) examined how to manage and maintain online presence from the perspective of deciding what to put on the site, how the site should look like and how the site should be organized and maintained.

Deciding What to Put on the Site

The first step is to decide what to put on the site. A firm must take this decision before embarking on e-marketing programme because without planning of web content, time and money may be wasted. The web content should depend on the e-marketing objective(s) and the target audience. The online activities must pursue their own, clearly defined strategic goals and objectives but must be in line with the corporate, business and marketing goals and objectives. By this, the online operation will be able to generate additional value and assist the physical organization to attain the corporate objectives. Such objectives can be: enhancing profitability, improving the firm's image, raising revenue, reducing operational costs, expanding the customer base, increasing customer retention or augmenting the product and brand awareness among new groups. The web objectives will form the basis for conducting the operation of the e-marketing strategy.

A firm's target audience consists of prospective buyers and marketers of the firm's products. To create an effective online presence, the firm must identify its target audience. Then, get information about what they want and how they want it, their demographics and psychographics. This will enable the web design to reflect the stlye, tone and information that will appeal to them.

Deciding How the Site Should Look Like

Deciding how the site should look like depends on how the firm wants to market its business, or product, how it wishes to be perceived, whom it wants to attract and what it wants visitors to do when they find it. In other words, it depends on a firm's positioning, audience and goals. Positioning refers to how a firm and its products are perceived by customers. To stand out from competitors, a firm and its product must have a unique market position. If not, potential customers will have no reason to select its product over those of competitors.

To know the position to establish and capture through e-marketing, the following questions need to be answered:

- What are we best at?
- What positions have other firms not yet taken?
- Whom do we want to attract?
- What do we want to accomplish?

A firm and its products should be perceived as unique or distinct compared to similar products so that the target web audience values and remembers it. Paying attention to positioning is crucial if a firm hopes to get market share on the web. It is not enough for a website to contain the firm's logo, product(s), list of services, price and promotion, the site must focus on creating and reinforcing a particular identity, ability, characteristics, feature, benefit or service. Emphasize a single theme and then let related information, graphics and links support the position.

How the Site Should be Organized and Maintained

To adequately organize and maintain online presence, there is need to have a web master. The responsibility of the web master is to take care of the site, monitor and oversee it. Do not assume that web users will find the site on their own just because it is there, it has to be promoted. Also, the content of the website need to be updated regularly so that customers and even business partners will not be disappointed when they visit the site.

Granitz and Greene Model

Granitz and Greene (2003) discussed additional e-marketing strategies. They are:

Personalization and Customization

The relationship with customers and stakeholders is an important asset that businesses should focus on. The use of online channels to analyze data with the aim of enhancing the value offered to customers is important for e-marketing success. Through regular feedback, users make their needs available or the provider deduce it. This can enable firms to personalize information based on the needs of the customer or user.

Community

The community concept involves creating a platform where users interact and share experiences. These interactions can bring in more people to the firm's site and get them involved with the product. The various social media platforms help businesses create these communities where feedback from customers is quick, and it is used to improve customer experience.

Consumer Tracking

The internet provides a huge data on customer behaviour. Firms use the metric from websites to analyse information such as number of views, visitors location, date of view, time of view, duration of viewing, links followed and other information. This information is used to analyze the effectiveness of a site and to track and predict consumer behaviour.

Mixing Bricks and Clicks

Granitz and Greene (2003) highlighted three options available to customers. In situations where customers want to shop through multiple channels, then the firm should be ready to serve customers through multiple channels. If customers differ between the channels, the firm should meet the differing needs of each segment. This method is easily observed in the e-commerce industry in Nigeria where customers can shop online and then pay offline.

CONCLUSION

The Internet is firmly established as a new marketing tool and it has significant implications for the marketing of products in Nigeria. With the evolution of e-marketing, marketers have the technology to mass customize and communicate their products to increasingly broad targets. It provides businesses with access to mass markets at an affordable price and allows them to undertake a personalized marketing approach. It also has implications for the marketing mix that firms need to employ to achieve marketing objectives. The traditional 4Ps (product, price, place and promotion) and the additional 3Ps (people, physical evidence and process) are relevant in e-marketing, however, there is need for more Ps that can effectively address the unique attributes of e-marketing. Three Ps (privacy, personalization and performance) have been identified as additional Ps that can be included to develop effective e-marketing strategies. Each element plays an important role in the overall strategy and must be developed to its fullest potential. This should be driven by the specific goals and objectives that the firm wants to achieve and the desired service quality that can offer competitive advantage in the online marketplace.

For firms operating in Nigeria that have been able to overcome the challenges of connectivity, it is important to manage and maintain the online presence. It is not enough to be present online, the website and the activities that customers can use it for have to be promoted and updated. Updating is necessary because the e-marketing environment is dynamic and in some cases unpredictable and so when changes occur, they should be reflected as quickly as possible. Another major issue is that of security and privacy. It includes protection against fraud and hacking of personal information which can provide third persons easy access to the information and financial accounts of others. It is a challenge that firms must strive to overcome because it can constitute a significant barrier to e-marketing.

Nigeria needs to develop her information and communications technology especially internet infrastructure so as to avail the benefits of e-marketing. An increase in internet penetration will enable businesses and individuals to go online and this will in turn lead to the growth and development of e-marketing.

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