



Social Media: Creative Tools for Advertising and Marketing of Products in the Face of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19)

¹Adeyemi, O. A., ²Ogundeji, S. T., ³Abdullahi, I. & ⁴Atukum, M. A.

^{1,4}Department of Mass Communication

^{2,3}Department of Marketing

The Federal Polytechnic, Bida Niger State, Nigeria

E-mail: june_6action@yahoo.com

Phone: 08063596596, 08032752250.

ABSTRACT

Social media platforms are currently the universally methods been adopted by many advertising and marketing organizations as a way of communicating and showcasing their products (goods and services) to the world, most especially at this period of corona virus disease (COVID-19) pandemic ravaging almost all the countries in the world. This study therefore highlighted the various forms of social media platforms, also discussed are the various significances and challenges of the adoption of social media platforms in advertising and marketing of products. Solutions were also proffered with recommendations put forward for some of the identified challenges. The study was carried out with secondary methodology, which was achieved with review of literatures including and not limited to textbooks, journal, websites and encyclopedia articles.

Keywords: Advertising, Marketing, Platforms, Products, Social Media.

24thiSTEAMS GoingGlobal Multidisciplinary Conference Proceedings ReferenceFormat

Adeyemi, O. A., Ogundeji, S. T., Abdullahi, I. & Atukum, M. A. (2020): Social Media: Creative Tools for Advertising and Marketing of Products in the Face of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19). Proceedings of the 24th iSTEAMS GoingGlobal Multidisciplinary Conference Proceedings. The University of Ghana/Council for Scientific & Industrial Research Ghana – Vtually Stationed in June, 2020. Pp 181-186. www.isteam.net/ghana2020

1. INTRODUCTION

It is no longer news that corona virus disease also known as (COVID-19) is ravaging almost all the countries in the world. Measures are been taken to reduce the spread of this pandemic disease. Amongst such methods are the total lockdown and stay at home order been implemented by governments in various countries of the world. Also, another measure is the stay safe campaign of keeping physical and social distance to avoid close contact with the carriers of the disease. As good and beneficial these measures are, they have also poised collateral damages to the well-being, social and business activities of individuals, companies and organizations. As many companies and organizations have shutdown their business and corporate activities in the face of COVID-19. One of such is the advertising and marketing organizations, as they find it very difficult to physically reach their esteem customers with various products (goods and services) readily available for purchase and consumption. According to Remziye (2014) advertising has crucial role in today's competitive marketing world, as it performs the communicative function of informing consumers about a company's product or services.



Considering this crucial role of advertising for an effective marketing, as an alternative, at this period of lockdown and keeping physical and social distance, the advertising and marketing outfits have resulted and adopted the social media platforms, also known as new media to get across their products (goods and services) to their customers and the needing populace. The twenty first century has been an era of increasing globalization and expansion and advances in science, technology, transportation and communication have been the main driving forces of globalization, these advancements have resulted in the spread of business ideas, knowledge and information amongst heterogeneous and scattered people located round the globe (Remziye, 2014).

Social media platforms also known as new media technologies have perhaps been the most powerful tools in creating linkage among people. Mobile telephony, the internet, social networks, tablets and other new media devices have greatly contributed in creating a seamless globalized society unlimited by physical distance, significantly altering the concepts of space, time and location (Saxena, 2005). These devices have become so pervasive that people's daily lives are becoming more and more centered around them. New media technologies have led to speed in operations, as business has to be conducted at the speed of thought. Business operations have also become more creative and flexible as social media makes available several alternative channels of reaching consumers. Examples of such channels are Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube. The flexibility in the use and timely delivery of information by these channels have made it possible for advertising and marketing outfits to reach their customers without any barrier of lockdown and social distancing as presently been experienced as a result of COVID-19. This study therefore discusses the various social media tools applicable for advertising and marketing of products in the face of COVID-19.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONCEPTS OF ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

Advertising is a form of communicative activation, which is informative and persuasive in nature, utilizing the mass or new media to persuade the consumers to purchase goods and services (Remziye, 2014). Advertising may be targeted at promoting a new product or designed to promote existing ones. Advertising, according to the British Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA), presents the most persuasive message to the right prospects for the product or service at the lowest possible cost (Jefkins, 1992 as cited in Remziye, 2014). Advertising is 'any form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services usually paid for by an identified sponsor' (Dominic, 2013 as cited in Remziye, 2014). According to Benson-Eluwa (2004) the advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (APCON) defined advertising as an information which is persuasive and informative about goods and services that paid for or sum of ideas which defined by advertisers via using media. On the other hand, Advertisement is an act of advertising which stands for giving public notice or to announcing publicly as a dictionary meaning (Tyagi & Kumar, 2004 as cited in Remziye, 2014).

When focused in the field of business and marketing, advertising is a propitious promotion of goods or services to the public, with the intention to draw attention of people and increase the amount of sales for these goods and services.

In the view of Svetlana (2014) the standard definition of advertising includes six main elements, which are:

- (a) Paid form of communication.
- (b) The presence of an identified sponsor.
- (c) Distribution through the media.
- (d) The presence of a specific audience for treatment.
- (e) Lack of personalization of distributed information.
- (f) Aimed action.



From this it follows that advertising is usually a non-personalized form of communication, paid by an identified sponsor, implemented in a certain way through the media and other legal means and aimed to familiarize with some products and its further acquisition by possibly large audience of consumers. Virtually any medium can be used for advertising, these include and not limited to Commercial advertising media can include wall paintings, billboards, printed flyers and rack cards, radio, cinema and television adverts, web banners, mobile telephone screens, magazines, newspapers, town criers e.t.c. Marketing is simply the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer (American Marketing Association, 1960 as cited in Tom, n.d).

Marketing involves satisfying customer needs or desires. Advertising and marketing are essential processes needed to ensure that products get to their target markets. Although thought by some to mean the same thing, advertising and marketing are different. Advertising involves more of communication as its focus is on disseminating information about ideas, goods and services. It involves making repeat and potential customers aware of a product or services. Each advertising plan is geared towards a particular product as the all advertisements are unique (Mallory, 2013).

3. THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media have become an important platform for companies to connect with their target audience and make an impression, also with the rise of digital platforms, effectiveness of advertisements has become an important area of study for marketers to determine the most efficient and appropriate medium of communication to place their advertisements (Rodriguez, 2017). In the opinion of Shabnoor and Tajinder (2014) social media is a platform for people to discuss their issues and opinions. They are computer tools that allow people to share or exchange information, ideas, images, videos and even more with each other through a particular network. Nowadays social media has been the important part of one's life from shopping to electronic mails, education and business tool.

Social media plays a vital role in transforming people's life style. Social media includes social networking sites and blogs where people can easily connect with each other. Since the emergence of these social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook as key tools for news, journalists and their organizations have performed a high-wire act (Aveseh, 2012). These sites have become a day to day routine for the people. Social media has been mainly defined to refer to "the many relatively inexpensive and widely accessible electronic tools that facilitate anyone to publish and access information, collaborate on a common effort, or build relationship"

3.1 Social Media Tools for Advertising and Marketing

Social media is the new buzz area in marketing that includes business, organizations and brands which helps to create news, make friends, make connections and make followers. Business use social media to enhance an organization's performance in various ways such as to accomplish business objectives, increasing annual sales of the organization. Social media provides the benefit as a communication platform that facilitates two way communications between a company and their stock holders. Business can be promoted through various social networking sites. Many of the organizations promote their business by giving advertisement on the social media in order to attract maximum users or customers. Customers can connect and interact with business on a more personal level by using social media. If an organization has established a brand, social media may help this organization to develop the existing brand and give the business a voice. Discussed below are some of the most commonly used social media tools for advertising and marketing of goods and services.

- (a) **Facebook:** Utilizing Facebook for digital marketing strategy is without doubt one of the best ways to connect and grow a social following online. Being one of the largest social media platforms, it provides insight into its users' interests, likes, dislikes, personal life and buying behavior. This large database of information can be tapped into by businesses or organizations to generate high quality leads, sales enquiries and traffic to your website. Facebook pages assist businesses, brands and organizations in sharing information and reaching out to people. Users like the pages that they are interested in. With this, they can stay in touch and get updates about different activities. The use of Facebook is about making the world more open and connected. This has a profound impact on the way people communicate and interact, this continually develops authentic ways for people to connect with one another as well as with the businesses, brands and institutions they care about, both on Facebook and across the web. Facebook allows marketers to stay connected with people throughout their day whether they are on their computers or mobile devices, at home or at work, watching TV or shopping with friends.
- (b) **WhatsApp:** WhatsApp is an instant messaging application which enables text messaging between users. It is similar to computer messaging programs (chat) that commonly exist in the web, with the difference that this one works in mobile phones. It is said to be multiplatform because it is available in different mobile operating systems that currently exist such as IOS, Android, Windows Phone, and Nokia. WhatsApp is an amazing tool that can help business stay in touch. Some amazing benefits of WhatsApp for businesses are it is **always free to use, it runs on multiple devices, and also has Multimedia support.**
- (c) **Twitter:** Today, social media is not only helping people to maintain their relations but also promote their businesses, views, grievances, or ideas. Twitter is one of its kinds that work on building fraternities of people sharing same or allied business industries and interests, running a campaign for marketing a business, which is far beyond maintaining one's personal relationships. Twitter is a social platform for sharing one's views. The users can open their account with Twitter and broadcast their views in the form of short messages. These messages are popularly known as **Tweets**. With hundreds of millions of users and over 500 million Tweets being sent each day, there is a great opportunity for businesses to reach a global audience of new and existing customers through Twitter.
- (d) **Instagram:** Instagram is one of the fastest growing social platforms and it has gained immense popularity over the years. It has become one of the most essential social networks amongst people, and continues to develop in popularity with over 400+ million dynamic users a month. It's no wonder then that businesses of all shapes and sizes are seizing the opportunity to use Instagram as one of their main marketing channels for brand awareness. If used properly, Instagram can be a great marketing tool for all sorts of businesses, whether you are selling a product or a service. Instagram is available for free on iOS, Android and Windows Phone devices. Instagram for every business is scaling up every second and will help you organize business in the best way. Below are the Instagram Marketing Strategies:
- (i) **Target Your Audience Wisely:** Implement right objective at right time for the right set of audience.
 - (ii) **Demographic:** Pick people belonging to desired age, gender, income, and lifestyle.
 - (iii) **Psychographic:** Need to consider person's attitude, interests, personal traits, values.
 - (iv) **Geographic:** Sell products to the right set of people.
 - (v) **Detailed Competitor Analysis:** Check the competitors' page regularly like how many people hits like, comment or tag their products and so on. Analyse them and make an effective instagram strategy.

Some of the advantages of using Instagram that adds to business opportunities are discussed below.

- (i) **You Can Promote Your Brand:** One can use Instagram to post marvelous photographs about your firm's services and products. On the other hand, maintain a strategic distance from any sort of exhausting, content heavy images, or any other infographics. Integrating Instagram into your social media marketing campaign can be a great tool to promote your business while being imaginative at the same time.
 - (ii) **You Can Invite More Users to Window Shop:** With this social media app, you can provide window-shopping experience for your followers, giving them an essence of your products and services. Share relevant and valuable information in the caption, like location details, sales, and something else to get the interest of your followers. Ensure you explain all relevant product information, in case your followers wish to purchase the product you feature in the photo.
 - (iii) **You Can Attract Fans and Boost Sales:** Instagram can be a staggering way to draw in more followers to your organization by promoting coupon codes and selective discounts. You can do this with any of your services and items. Creating exclusivity and favored status for particular audiences is a proven technique for driving engagement.
- (e) **YouTube:** The use of YouTube advertising by companies to communicate with their customers is increasing nowadays, along with the increasing number of YouTube audiences. YouTube allows billions of people to discover, watch and share originally-created videos. YouTube provides a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe and acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small. For today's consumer, the meaning of "relevance" has changed. It's no longer enough to simply know your audience. To break through, you need to know what people are looking for and in what context. Research finds that relevant video ads get three times the attention of an average video advertisement. So understanding your audience's intent and being able to respond to that intent is becoming table stakes. The right message, creative, and ad format are keys to capturing their attention. One of such platforms to achieve this is the use of YouTube for advertising and marketing.

4. BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING AND MARKETING TOOLS

4.1 Benefits of Social Media Tools in Advertising and Marketing

What follows are benefits accruable from social media tools in advertising and marketing

- (a) Social Media helps to better understand audience by their likes and dislikes.
- (b) It helps the business for promotional activities.
- (c) Social networking sites helps to make new customers by providing useful facilities.
- (d) Helps to enhance market insight and stretch out beyond your rivals with online networking.
- (e) It also helps to increase awareness among brands and reach with little to no budget.

4.2 Challenges of Social Media Tools in Advertising And Marketing

Below is a chronology of challenges of social media tools in advertising and marketing

- (a) In business filed social media is not entirely risk free because many of the fans and followers are free to post their opinion on a particular organization, the negative comment can lead the organization to failure.



- (b) Many of the large organization have fallen victim to the hackers.
- (c) The wrong online brand strategy can doom a company, and put at a huge viral social disadvantage.
- (d) Getting involved with Social Media is very time consuming. As an organization you should assign a person to always bolster your pages and profile with significant substance.
- (e) Most companies have difficulty measuring the results of social media advertising.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has discussed the vital roles that social media can make in the advertising and marketing of products, and in reaching out to the public at this period of (COVID-19) lockdown. The study shows that as the lockdown continues, business activities as it relates to advertising and marketing of products can still continue and flourishing, without violating the laid down guidelines of social and physical distancing. With various benefits and advantages associated with the use of social media for advertising and marketing of products, it will be of great impact for companies and organizations in carrying out the activities of advertising and marketing of their products to adopt the usage of social media even at less cost at this period of (COVID-19) pandemic and leverage more on the power for creative illustrations that the social media platforms afford in such a way that creative and persuasive messages would be passed across using appropriate appeals embedded in video and graphics contents on the social media platforms. Also, it will be worthwhile for big advertising and marketing firms to partner and interface with telecommunication firms for reduction in the cost of telecommunication infrastructures and internet facilities so as to make access to internet much more accessible and affordable.

REFERENCES

1. Aveseh, A. (2012). Social Media and Ethics. The Impact of Social Media on Journalism Ethics, Center for International Media Ethics (CIME).
2. Benson-Eluwa, V. (2004). Advertising: Principles and Practice. Enugu: Magnet Business Enterprises.
3. Remziye, T. (2014). Importance of Creative Advertising and Marketing According to University Students' Perspective. International Review of Management and Marketing. Vol. 4, No. 3, 2014, pp.239-246. ISSN: 2146-4405. Available at: www.econjournals.com
4. Rodriguez, P. R. (2017), "Effectiveness of YouTube Advertising: A Study of Audience Analysis". Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed at: <http://scholarworks.rit.edu/theses>
5. Saxena, R. (2005) Marketing Management. New Delhi: Tata McGraw-Hill.
6. Shabnoor, S. & Tajinder, S. (2016). Social Media its Impact with Positive and Negative Aspects. International Journal of Computer Applications Technology and Research. Volume 5– Issue 2, 71 - 75, 2016, ISSN:- 2319–8656.
8. Svetlana, F. (2014). The Role of Advertising in Promoting a Product. Thesis: Centria University of Applied Sciences Degree Programme in Industrial Management. https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/80777/Frolova_Svetlana.pdf
9. Tom, H. (n.d). Marketing Concepts and Definitions. https://tandfbis.s3.amazonaws.com/fp-usermedia/uploadedFiles/Record%20Label%20Marketing%20e_Chapter%201_pages%201%20-%2010.pdf