



Online Marketing Strategies On Business Development In Bayelsa State

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ABSTRACT

The study looked at online marketing strategies on business development in Bayelsa State. The study used three research questions and one hypothesis. Descriptive survey design was employed in the study. The study used a population 10,234 SME operators in the state. Random sampling technique was used to select 2,000 SME operators from three local government area of the state. The instrument was validated by two experts in the department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe. The instrument data were analyzed using simple arithmetic means. Findings from the study showed that Online marketing via email, Newsletter, affiliate, keyword and paypal are highly adequate for consumer patronage. It was finally recommended amongst others that SME business operators should train and adopt online marketing for easy transaction of goods and services.

Keyword: Online, Marketing, Strategies & Business Development

INTRODUCTION

Online marketing involves sales and development of goods and services via internet platform. The different types of marketing platforms are affiliate marketing, E-mail marketing, keyword and online advertisement, pay per click, pay per lead and pay per sale and so on are available for consumer exploration. It is no longer news that technology has added remarkable ease to total human activities and relationships, but it is news when new and specific frontiers are opened for use in the different aspects of endeavor. The introduction and use of the Internet, for instance, in Marketing and marketing activities is not just an aspect of technological event to ease human endeavor, but a huge opening of the frontier of marketing development and human relationship. Marketing now has more than one soul and can be approached from various in-routes.

The advent of computer technology revolutionizes the method of operation of business activities globally. The introduction of internet services also creates the window for distance communication and the transaction of goods and services. This invention had influenced the lifestyle of business world and factor in many opportunities. According to Kotler & Armstrong, (2010) the explosive growth in computer communication and information and other digital technologies has made a major impact on the ways companies bring values to their customers.

This revolutionary developments as rightly observed by these scholars have led companies and consumers to be able to reach out to each other anywhere in the world with only a touch of some parts of the devices almost as if they had stretched out their hands to touch and whisper. Products can view and assessed before official transaction. This method had cut away time and distance. Today, companies simply put up the required info at their Websites and consumers reach out to them with only few clicks of the computer mouse, touch of buttons or screen of phones to log onto the websites to make their purchases effortlessly, without leaving the comfort of their environment, be it home, workplace, leisure parks or any other place wherever.

Advertisement pattern via online marketing becomes easier. Payment is more effective and a little bit effortless. Shoppers do not have to experience the inconveniences of taking associated risks of travelling to the market places as in the traditional marketing system; they interact directly with sellers over the internet and goods purchased over the internet are delivered to the required location. The huge expenditure of energy and associated stress in the totality of traditional marketing has greatly reduced if not eliminated completely, in many cases. The whole invention and practice has greatly impacted on the global marketing landscape and the growth of users has wonderfully and rapidly penetrated the globe.

It is noticed that many professionals wonder at the explosive nature of the internet and enveloping almost all corners of the world. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) as marketing professionals posted that “the most dramatic new digital technology is the internet”, whose users growth from 1.2 billion in 2010 has hit an estimated 3.4 billion by 2015, concluding that “the technology boom is providing exciting new opportunities for marketers.” Because of the observable rapid growth in the use of the internet, marketers have cashed in to make it a means of reaching its customer and so effectively been used. This has made online shopping the fastest growing form of marketing and the world a global market for all countries. Nigeria as a marketing participant and its teaming population is not left out.

Nigeria, unfortunately is classified among the developing countries, but has a large consuming population, so this author is triggered to find out where Nigeria is, in terms of their participation in or embracing online shopping; when was online population introduced into Nigeria, what is the level of absorption or penetration of the Nigerian consumers; who are the users considering gender, age, education and income group. These are areas which shall be examined. But it is worthwhile to give the reader a clear understanding of what Online Shopping is, before discussion on the areas on focus.

The Nigerian markets still have the potential to grow beyond what it is today. The mass education and orientation program of had not creped deeply into the system to trigger mass exploration of e-business transaction.

Literature Review

E-market system in Nigeria

The complete digital of Nigerian market is still at the developmental stage. Nigeria has the largest population of black race in the world and can be identified as a huge market for business patronage in the world. Nigeria with over 186 million people is the largest market in Africa. It is envisaged that by 2030, one in every six African will be Nigerian and Nigeria will have one of the largest economies in the world. This implies a huge dominance factor in Nigerian consumption level. Before 2016, Nigeria was seen as Africa’s second largest economy and its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was \$263 billion. Report by World Bank and Euro monitor International has it that Nigeria’s middle class rose by 28% and its GDP based on purchasing power has increased by 21.67% in the last four years. Today, it is seen as Africa’s largest economy. With this green market background, this research believes that only a not-so-wise investor would not want to invest in Nigeria, even in the phase of some challenges.

Nigeria market still lies within the embrace of local mobilization and sales of goods and services. Most areas are not assessable to good internet network system. There is low percentage of internet users especially the local SME operators. In the early years after the launch of the internet, some Nigerians mainly in the Diaspora started using the PayPal and others at home followed, only to be shocked by the closure of PayPal in 2005 for reasons related to Cyber fraud. PayPal did not only close all Nigerian accounts but also refused registration of any new account that was traced to a Nigerian IP address. However in 2014 it revoked that policy and arrangement, and re-entered the Nigerian online market and is doing well now.

Record show that Ecobank was the first to launch an internationally accepted Credit card (Ecobank MasterCard) in 2004. Other banks like Zenith, GTB, UBA, etc. followed later. This provided consumers in Nigeria the medium to make purchases online overseas. Sadiq-Mabeko, O. (2016). This scholar believes that „the turning point“ was the report of survey of Master card World wide of June 11, 2012 which showed that 92% of Nigerians who took part in the survey indicated a positive attitude towards use

of online shopping. It also indicated that 52% of the Nigerians who had shopped online in the last three months before the survey said they will continue to shop online within the next six months. With this report this write-up is tempted to believe an enticingly perfect foundation was laid for Online shopping in Nigeria.

Online shopping in Nigeria by local stores may have started with the operation by Fouani Nigeria Ltd, as a distributor of LG Electronic products in 2011. However, on July 3, 2012, a truly online store in the name of Jumia was launched, initially with the name, Kasuwa, a Hausa word meaning Market. It later changed its name to Jumia till date. Konga.com, DealDey, and many others were also launched in the same year. (Sadiq-Mabeko O. 2016). Though there are claims that there are over 200 Nigerian online stores in the net, a research report has listed 158 of them, with a visit to more than 70% of them to ascertain their genuineness, without their knowing the motive.

There is therefore the need to see the effect of online marketing strategies on business development in Bayelsa State.

Purpose of the Study

The study is aimed at assessing online marketing strategies on business development in Bayelsa State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Find out how adequate online marketing via email is good for consumer patronage.
2. Find out how adequate online marketing via newsletter is good for consumer patronage.
3. Find out how adequate online marketing via keyword advertising is good for consumer patronage.
4. Find out how adequate online marketing via affiliate marketing is good for consumer patronage.
5. Find out how adequate online marketing via pay per sale is good for consumer patronage.

Research Questions

The following research questions were adopted and used for the study:

1. How adequate do online marketing via email good for consumer patronage.
2. How adequate do online marketing via newsletter good for consumer patronage.
3. How adequate do online marketing via keyword advertising good for consumer patronage.
4. How adequate do online marketing via affiliate marketing good for consumer patronage.
5. How adequate do online marketing via pay per sale good for consumer patronage.

METHODS

The descriptive survey design was employed in the study. The researchers developed an instrument titled "Online Marketing Strategies for Business Development" (OMSBD). The instrument is a four point rating scale consisting of Highly Adequate (HA), Adequate (A), Moderately Adequate (MA) and Not Adequate (NA). The response options were weighed as 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The questionnaire items were subject to validation by two experts in the department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Ekowe. The experts checked the language content of the items checked the language content of the questionnaires and the necessary online marketing sites. Their corrections and observations were effected before distribution to the field.

Marketing platforms were created to enable business operators to access various online marketing sites such as group Facebook page, Jumia, Konga, Ibay and Ali Express. A collective Facebook group was created to invite various business men and women in Bayelsa Metropolis.

The Bayelsa online marketing platform (www Bayelsa online market) was explored and was used to access the traffic in marketing and purchasing of items within the state. The online marketing platform has existed for more than two years in the state. The marketing platform advertises goods ranging from homes, kitchen utensils, electronics, and so on. The online site has over two hundred thousand followers linked to face book accounts, twitters, emails, LinkedIn and so on.

The questionnaires were developed and distributed to the eight local governments in Bayelsa State. But more of the instrument was administered in Yenegoa local government area. A total population 10,234 SME operators were identified through various trade unions in the state. 2,000 questionnaires were

developed and distributed to sampled local government area. The sampled local government areas include yenegea, Ekeremor and Kolokuma. The sample was achieved through random sampling techniques. SME business operators were trained by three experts from Lagos. The training lasted for three days. The training module include online uploading of business profile, products, downloading of images and communicating with online trading platforms such as Jumia, Konga, Ibay and Ali Express. Corresponding with customers via personal online platform was discussed. The trainee were taught on creation of twitter handle and face book group business chart. The researchers with the aid of research assistants distributed the questionnaire items directly to SME operators to get initial feedback on costumers' reaction on the use of online learning via various trade platforms. The retrieved items were analyzed using simple mean. Mean value less than 2.50 is inadequate, while mean value 2.50 and above is adequate.

DATA ANALYSIS PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research question 1

How adequate do online marketing via email good for consumer patronage.

Table 1: Online marketing via email good for consumer patronage

S/No	Item	Mean	Decision
1	Online marketing via email is good for consumer patronage	3.50	Highly Adequate

Data presented in table 1 revealed that online marketing via email is highly adequate for consumer patronage.

Research question 2

How adequate do online marketing via newsletter good for consumer patronage.

Table 2: Online marketing via newsletter good for consumer patronage

S/No	Item	Mean	Decision
2	Online marketing via Newsletter is good for consumer patronage	3.55	Highly Adequate

Data presented in table 2 revealed that online marketing via Newsletter is good for consumer patronage.

Research question 3

How adequate do online marketing via keyword advertising good for consumer patronage.

Table 3: Online marketing via keyword advertising good for consumer patronage

S/No	Item	Mean	Decision
3	Online marketing via keyword advertising good for consumer patronage.	3.56	Highly Adequate

Data presented in table 3 revealed that online marketing via keyword advertising is highly adequate for consumer patronage.

Research question 4

How adequate do online marketing via affiliate marketing good for consumer patronage.

Table 3: Online marketing via affiliate marketing good for consumer patronage

S/No	Item	Mean	Decision
4	Online marketing via affiliate marketing is good for consumer patronage.	3.54	Highly Adequate

Data presented in table 4 revealed that online marketing via affiliate marketing is highly adequate for consumer patronage.

Research question 5

How adequate do online marketing via pay per sale good for consumer patronage.

Table 5: Online marketing via pay per sale good for consumer patronage

S/No	Item	Mean	Decision
5	Online marketing via pay per sale is good for consumer patronage.	3.58	Highly Adequate

Data presented in table 5 revealed that online marketing via pay per sale is highly adequate for consumer patronage.

Summary of Findings

The findings are summarized as follows:

1. Online marketing via email is highly adequate for consumer patronage.
2. Online marketing via Newsletter is good for consumer patronage.
3. Online marketing via keyword advertising is highly adequate for consumer patronage.
4. Online marketing via affiliate marketing is highly adequate for consumer patronage.
5. Online marketing via pay per sale is highly adequate for consumer patronage.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings revealed that online marketing via email, newsletter, keyword advertising, affiliate marketing and pay pal is highly adequate for consumer patronage. Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa with a projected number of 186,879,760 people by end of 2017 or there about. It means Nigeria is the largest internet user in Africa. It may be deduced that this credit on internet usage is as a result of the large population. But it is argued that the quality of Nigeria’s internet service is poor.

Research findings revealed that 49% of Nigerians preferred online shopping. But between 2014 and 2016, 97% have currently shopped online, at least once per year and 78% prefer Payment on Delivery. Jumia leads the e-tail shops in Nigeria with 46% market share, followed by Konga 32% and DealDey third. About 76% of Nigerian shoppers use smart phones for their shopping, compared to China’s 86% and India’s 82%.

Experts in the field say Nigerians are well educated, smart, sophisticated and experienced online shoppers, operating successfully locally and in cross-border transactions. According to a recent report (Broll Shopper Segmentation Report 2016), Nigeria is ahead on the curve when compared to online shopping practices in Kenya and South Africa.

There is a report that OLX, one of the leading shops has closed its office in Nigeria in 2016. Efrtin.com had earlier closed down in 2015, and according to (Ogunfanfuwa, 2016), Konga sold its business to Zinox group, citing high cost of doing business in the country as the reason.

CONCLUSION

The study in all had identified that on line business transaction via online marketing via email, newsletter, keyword advertising, affiliate marketing and pay pal is highly adequate for consumer patronage.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Finally, it was recommended that SME business operators should train and adopt online marketing for easy transaction of goods and services.

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