

Effect of digital marketing on the performance of manufacturing firms in Aba metropolis

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Abstract

In a competitive business environment, organizations try to reach their customers in the best possible way and this requires these firms to develop strategies that will create customer satisfaction, value and loyalty. The study focuses on digital marketing and marketing performance of manufacturing firms with special interest on WAMCO Nigeria Plc. The problem that leads to this study is that little knowledge has been provided by researchers and academicians on the impact of digital marketing on manufacturing firms as a leverage factor for competition and various strategic techniques and tools firms can adopt to ensure that customer's needs are identified and profitably satisfied. The major objective of the study was to determine the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies on the Performance of manufacturing firms. It was found that digital marketing strategies plays a crucial role in helping firms to design and deliver new products and services with unique features and redirecting and redesigning their business processes to meet current changes. The study found out that digital marketing platforms used by the manufacturing firms were Search Engine Optimization (SEO), digital advertising, social media marketing. The study found out that digital marketing strategies have over years improved the performance of WAMCO NG LTD as it enhanced uptake of the firm's products by the consumer, lower costs, lower working capital, increased revenue, increased customer base of the bank, increased market share, increased web traffic, lower fixed capital, accelerate cash flows, reduce revenue volatility and reduce risk. The study concludes that digital marketing is prerequisite for enhanced marketing performance. The study recommends that organizations should apportion adequate fund to cover their digital marketing budgets since it is a platform through which firms can achieve competitive advantage. Limitation of the study is based on the theoretical nature of the study which did not give room for data collection and analysis and suggestion for further studies was given.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In a competitive business environment, organizations try to reach their customers in the best possible way and this requires these firms to develop strategies that will create customer satisfaction, value and loyalty (Hugh and Elizabeth, 2006). Increasing usage of digital media by consumers and the tendency of more potential users joining the digital age, more companies are using digital marketing to reach their target markets (Keynar and Amichai-Hamburger, 2014).

More than 3 billion people are using the internet, according to the United Nations agency that oversees international communications. The number of internet users has increased from 738 million in 2000 to 3.2 billion in 2015, according to a new report from the International Telecommunication Union (Davidson, 2015). That's a seven fold increase that brought internet penetration up from 7% to 43% of the global population. Digital Marketing is the practice of promoting products and services using digital distribution channels and the ubiquitous nature of the Internet and its wide global access has made it an extremely effective mode of communication between businesses and customers (Rowley, 2011).

Clearly, people are exposing themselves to more and more digital and social media. This is for many purposes, including in their roles as consumers as they search for information about products, purchase and consume them, and communicate with others about their experiences (Stephen, 2015). Marketers have responded to this fundamental shift by increasing their use of digital marketing channels. In fact, by 2017 approximately one-third of global advertising spending is forecast to be in digital channels. Thus, future marketing will largely be carried out in digital settings, particularly social media and mobile. It is therefore necessary for consumer and industrial research to examine and understand firms' performance in digital environments (Stephen, 2015).

Digital marketing is the application of technologies to aid marketing activities hence improves customer knowledge by matching their needs (Chaffey, 2013). The growth of Internet technology has enormous potential as it reduces the costs of product and service delivery and extends geographical boundaries in bringing buyers and sellers together. The Internet also allows small businesses to access markets and to maintain a presence that helps them to compete against the big players in the industry.

Digital marketing therefore, plays a crucial role in helping organization to design and deliver new products and services with unique features and redirecting and redesigning their business processes to meet current changes (Laudon and Laudon, 2010). The old pushed advertising approach is no longer highly effective with digital media and in the process; marketers are in the process of finding ways to pull consumers to their websites and into a relationship. Marketers are joining consumers online, in their social networks, search engines, and other favorite stomping grounds (Simmons 2011) since it has become necessary for marketers to find ways to create a unified experience across all the channels and exploring how consumers use them to interact with the firm. The growth of the digital marketing among various firms and the gap between strategic adoptions of digital marketing by the firm means there is a gap on how firms adopt digital marketing.

1.1.1 The Concept of Digital Marketing

Internet marketing for digital products and services is one of the most significant developments in the information systems industry (Ng'ang'a, 2015). The growth of digital marketing has presented a unique challenge for both marketing and information system managers. The growth of Internet technology has enormous potential as it reduces the costs of product and service delivery and extends geographical boundaries in bringing buyers and sellers together (Ng'ang'a, 2015).

Furthermore, the Internet is used for advertising for example the spread of information by e-mail, banners, splash display and viral marketing or partnership advertising (Bandyopadhyay, 2002). Sharma and Sheth (2004) explain that the Internet revolution changed the behavior of customers and sellers since it provides new exchange platforms and communication channels. Mobile, the Internet, e-mail, and video are a few channels that are increasingly trending and there is need to have knowledge about these techniques since buyers use the Internet as a source to find suppliers on a global level (Leek, 2008).

Companies have explored digital-marketing platforms such as video ads, sponsored content and online promotions. Web sites have been overhauled, and micro sites for specific products or promotions have multiplied. Since digital products and services, such as graphics and on-line banking, can be delivered via the Internet, they are naturally considered information-oriented

products or services. Porter and Millar (2005) mention the strategic importance of new technology as an opportunity to gain competitive advantages. The Internet has created a large opportunity to share and communicate data through electronic movement of information. Companies use it both internally in organization to facilitate business purposes (Bandyopadhyay, 2002).

Marketers that use the Internet in their marketing strategy to affect the efficiency and effectiveness in the companies' processes also gain an advantage compared to companies using the traditional transactional approaches (Ng'ang'a, 2015). Buyers on the Internet follow a buying process just as for offline purchases. They search for information, evaluate options and make a buying decision.

It is much more convenient for businesses to conduct surveys online with a purpose to get relevant information from targeted groups and analyzing the results based on their responses. Potential customers can look for reviews and recommendations to make informed decisions about buying a product or using the service. On the other hand, businesses can use the exercise to take action on relevant feedback from customers in meeting their needs more accurately. Change is constant and with time new ideas are accepted and adopted. In order to make the decision to understand the advantage of online marketing, advantages must be highlighted for industry players to realize its power (Saddiqui, 2012).

1.1.2 The Concept of Organizational/firm Performance

A firm is a business organization, such as a corporation, limited liability company or partnership that sells goods or services to make a profit. While most firms have just one location, a single firm can consist of one or more establishments, as long as they fall under the same ownership and, typically utilize the same Employer Identification Number (EIN) (Investopedia, 2016c).

The title "firm" is typically associated with business organizations that practice law, but the term can be used for a wide variety of business operation units, such as accounting. "Firm" is often used interchangeably with "business" or "enterprise" (Investopedia, 2016c). An organization is a social unit of people that is structured and managed to meet a need or to pursue collective goals. All organizations have a management structure that determines relationships between the

different activities and the members, and subdivides and assigns roles, responsibilities, and authority to carry out different tasks.

Organizations are open systems--they affect and are affected by their environment. In an organization, the sales planning and sales policies are formulated on the basis of marketing organization. It ensures the smooth and systematic implementation of plans, policies and programs which are much needed for the control of sales activities so as to maximize the efficiency and profitability. It also brings about innovative and better methods of distribution and helps to meet the increasing production capacity. It also equips the organization with the necessary tools to counteract competition. Marketing organization structures the organization in such a way that brings about improvement in customer services and their satisfaction.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In today's challenging business environment, business must create strategies in order to grow beyond its known scope. The ability of managers to respond rapidly and appropriately to the environmental challenges depends largely on the information systems management to reflect hopes, dreams and realities of real business situation. A substantial portion of business operator's responsibility lies in his creative abilities driven by new knowledge and information.

However, little knowledge has been provided by researchers and academicians on the impact of digital marketing on manufacturing firms as a leverage factor for competition and various strategic techniques and tools firms can adopt to ensure that customer's needs are identified and profitably satisfied. As such, managers of firms in the manufacturing industry do not anticipate and understand the various ways of satisfying customers through digital means. In this light, firm lose a large number of their customer due to the limited knowledge on digital marketing.

Most manufacturing firm has eroded the principle of marketing concept in dealing with their customers. Little or no time is spent by managers or executives to identify what needs and wants of the target market are before coming up with a new digital service. Their core concern is how to maximize profit in the name of digital marketing irrespective of whether the services meet the expectation of the customers or not. This has resulted to increasing dissatisfaction among consumers which in most cases have propelled consumers that express some level of loyalty to

refrain from carrying out business transaction with such manufacturing firm thence, brand switching to other similar⁴ manufacturing firm (Uke, 2016)

More so, the apathetic and inept management exhibited by personnel has diminished the digital appearance of marketing. This fact has given other manufacturing firm with the zeal and spirit of information and spirit of information technology an edge over competitors.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to ascertain the effect of digital marketing on the performance of manufacturing firms in Aba metropolis. However, the specific objective of the study is to;

- i. ascertain the relationship between Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and customer patronage.
- ii. determine the influence of Digital Advertising on customer satisfaction.
- iii. ascertain the impact of Social Media Marketing on customer retention.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to have an in-depth understanding of the study objective, the following research question was raised;

- i. how search Engine Optimization (SEO) influence customer patronage?
- ii. how digital advertising influence customer satisfaction?
- iii. how social media marketing influence customer retention of Peak Milk Nigeria?

The study will impact to research on digital marketing and its impact in the light of competitive challenges. In particular, it contributes to the rising body of research on how firms in the manufacturing industry can cope with the increasingly competitive global market and strategies they use to not only maintain and improve their competitive positions, but also acquire new market share regionally and internationally.

The management and staff of various organizations will find this study an invaluable source of material in developing and harnessing their competitive strategies in the present evolving and dynamic business environment. This study will provide insight on some of the challenges that may be faced in the development and implementation of strategies and how they can avoid them.

The government and regulatory bodies of the industry will also find invaluable information in how digital marketing strategies can be adopted and as a result put in place policies that will guide and encourage other profit and nonprofit organizations in implementing their strategies in an ethical manner. The policy makers could use the results of the study to identify and bridge up gaps in the existing marketing strategies.

The study will educate student in marketing on the most recent trends of digital marketing technique which may serve as a window to further research for students and scholars.

This study may also add to the existing body of knowledge by stimulating new areas for further research through the findings and subsequent recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is instructed based on the research objectives. It reviews the relevant literature available that focuses on the theoretical framework, effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and the impact of digital marketing on organizational performance.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

2.2.1 Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search engine optimization is arguably the most cost effective digital marketing technique, but also the most challenging to get right. SEO is an integral part of any digital marketing strategy; a focused element of an overall holistic approach of driving customers to your business via online platforms (Pronto, 2015). Success in SEO is dependent on management's ability to understand the most important SEO ranking factors which give you the best position and then working hard to perform better than competitors. When SEO is used as part of a digital marketing campaign, it will make the firm's website easier to find on the search engines. By attracting targeted traffic to the website, there is a much better chance of getting conversions as the people visiting will be looking for that particular product or service (Smarter D.M, 2014).

2.2.2 Digital Advertising

Also known as internet advertising/marketing is when business leverage internet technologies to deliver promotional advertisements to consumers(VangieBael, 2016). This advertising technology exists on the internet, on smart phone and hand-held media devices, and even on automobiles and billboards. Manufacturing firms use digital advertising to build or maintain a brand image and market products and services to consumers(Sherrie Scott). Ads are one of the most trending techniques to use digital marketing thus, managers should not underestimate its potentials but rather seek knowledge in modifying, testing and measuring its performance.

2.2.3 Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining traffic or attention through social media platform and website thereby promote a product or service(Felix, Ravschnabel, P.A; Hinsch, C. 2016). On a strategic level, social media marketing includes the management of the implementation of a digital marketing campaign, governance, setting the scope and establishment of a firm's desired social media culture and tone. To use social media effectively, firms should learn to allow customers and internet users to post user-generated content(e.g. online comments, reviews, etc.), rather than using marketer-prepared advertising copy (Filier, Raffaele, 2015 and Schivinski, Bruno; Dabrowski, 2016). Social media marketing involves the use of social networks, consumers' online brand-related activities (COBRA) and electronic word of mouth (eWOM) to successfully advertise online (Schivinskiet al 2016).

Organizational Performance

2.2.4 Customer Patronage

Modern digital marketing facilitates customer-oriented marketing and market segmentation. Market segmentation facilitates formation of marketing-mix which is more specific and useful for achieving customer patronage. Segment-wise approach is better and effective as compared to integrated approach for the whole market, it facilitates introduction of suitable marketing mix: Marketing segmentation enables a producer to understand the needs of consumers, their behavior and expectations as information is collected segment-wise in an accurate manner such information is purposefully usable(Clark and Dorie, 2012). With increasing use of digital

channels, firms need to evolve their sales and marketing efforts from broad based brand and branch focused campaigns to include more effective digital marketing thereby encourage customer patronage.

2.2.5 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction sits at the core of key concept in marketing. Digital marketing provides a cost efficient modern marketing approach that nurtures customer satisfaction, is easily tracked and unprecedented opportunities to measure Return on Investment(ROI). Well-structured digital marketing strategy and technique that has the interest of the customer at heart will boost sales and satisfaction, which in turn encourages customer retention, blanket patronage and referrers.

2.2.6 Customer retention

Customer retention refers to the ability of a firm to retain its customers over some specified period. It is a key drive of growth and long-term profits for any business. While some businesses still value acquisition of new customers, it's actually counterintuitive based on what we know about the lifetime value of existing customers (Robert M. Brecht, Ph.D. 2015).

Effectiveness of Digital Marketing Strategies

The growth of digital marketing depends on effectively adapting to change, improving customer insights, then turning them into improvements in customer experience and service. It also depends on engaging and building communities with target customers, improving the effectiveness of marketing to be heard and remembered, and adding creative channels to communicate value propositions (Shabgoo, Gilaninia, and Mousavian, 2011). It certainly depends on the quality of employees, their training, and their ability to operate as a team.

Digital Marketing and Competitive Advantage

Manufacturing firms have been in the process of significant transformation. The force behind the transformation of these institutions is innovation in information technology. Information and communication technology is at the Centre of this global change curve of digital marketing (Mirhoseini, 2010). Change has long been the only constant in a world filled with technological innovations and adaptations. Marketers have grown accustomed to learning how to use new tools. Navigating new channels is part of everyday life. Rules are defined and then discarded

when they become obsolete (Mishra, 2008). The ability to adapt the company's digital marketing strategy to fit the current marketplace is a mandatory skill. Today's change is different from past evolutions. Adapting marketing strategies won't keep the company competitive. The digital marketing model has to be reworked from the ground up. For some companies, the corporate culture has to be changed to make departments work together (Mauro, & Tschoegl, 2008).

New digital marketing technologies like social media, mobile, and analytics are advancing rapidly on the economic landscape. These innovations are used widely by consumers and employees alike. Lee (2009) noted that executives in every industry – from media to electronics to paint manufacturing – face a bewildering array of new digital opportunities.

Digital Marketing and Customer Service

Modern digital marketing facilitates consumer-oriented marketing and market segmentation. Market segmentation facilitates formation of marketing-mix which is more specific and useful for achieving marketing objectives. Segment-wise approach is better and effective as compared to integrated approach for the whole market, it facilitates introduction of suitable marketing mix: Market segmentation enables a producer to understand the needs of consumers, their behavior and expectations as information is collected segment-wise in an accurate manner. Such information is purposefully usable (Clark and Dorie, 2012). The characteristics of the evolution in developing and developed countries are slightly different because of the lower level of Internet use and slower speed of Internet access in developing markets, but the overall trend toward greater use of digital channels for business is similar. With increasing use of digital channels, firms need to evolve their sales and marketing efforts from broad based brand and branch focused campaigns to include more effective digital marketing. Multichannel integration of sales and marketing is the ultimate objective. This change of focus is complicated by the rise of social media, and the fact that the nature of interaction with customers in digital channels is not the same as it has been in traditional channels.

Digital Marketing and Growth

The customer base is the group of customers who repeatedly purchase the goods or services of a business. These customers are a main source of revenue for a company. The customer base may

be considered the business's target market, where customer behaviors are well understood through market research or past experiences (Rafaeli, 2010). Subsequently digital marketing is revolutionizing how retail financial services companies operate. Underpinning this of course is the growing access to the Internet, and the proliferation of mobile phones. Digital channels are also producing significantly more data which can be used to profile customers, understand their needs, and target them in smaller and smaller segments with the appropriate offers. Clark and Dorie (2012) noted that organizations (specifically banks) need to take digital developments seriously because new competitors have been set up from the outset as online businesses and see analytics as an essential core capability. The technologies and practices are there to be exploited. According to Kates & Matthew (2013) digital marketing is more of a challenge for established firms operating in a more regulated environment. Many firms are therefore still at very early stages in terms of digital marketing capability – offline or online – but there are examples of firms who now have all the pieces in place to be leaders in digital marketing. This includes among other things having a real time single view of the customer, advanced use of analytics like predictive analysis, and the ability to deliver offers to customers in real time in multiple channels (Welch, & Worthington, 2010). Mcmillan&Schumaker (2011) noted that digital adoption helps provide cost-effective, consistent personalized customer messaging as compared to traditional marketing such as print, television, direct mail and so on.

Impact of Digital Marketing on Organizational Performance

Every organization exists to achieve a particular goal. Organizational performance is the final achievement of an organization and contains a few things, such as the existence of certain targets, has a period of time in achieving these targets and the realization of efficiency and effectiveness (Gibson *et al.*, 2010).

Organizational performance includes multiple activities that help in establishing the goals of the organization, and monitor the progress towards the target (Johnson *et al.*, 2006). Hopkins and Hopkins (2007) used three measures in the financial performance of banks, namely, profits (or net income), return on investment and return on shareholder equity (ROE). Comparative performance can be measured in terms of an organization's current performance relative to other

organizations in its industry in terms of product quality, employee morale, on time delivery, inventory management and employee productivity (Kates and Matthew, 2013).

Organizational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organization as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). According to (Richard, 2009) organizational performance encompasses three specific areas of firm outcomes: (a) financial performance (profits, return on assets, return on investment, etc.); (b) product market performance (sales, market share, etc.); and (c) shareholder return (total shareholder return, economic value added, etc.). The term Organizational effectiveness is broader. For the purpose of this study, firm and organization may be used interchangeably.

The advent of digital marketing offers organizations a new frontier of opportunities and challenges. Organizations need to understand the drivers that influence the adoption of digital marketing to allow them create solutions and plans to attract consumers to their products and services, hence enable them gain a greater representation in the global industry market (Ghobakhloo *et al.*, 2011). Digital marketing therefore allows organizations a fighting chance for success in the use of local and internal markets. Internet as a marketing tool provides significant opportunities for companies to seek and adopt innovative practices in order to address the increasing demands of consumers (Rafaeli, 2010). Better supply chain management has been achieved and a reduced cost of transaction. The internet allows for fewer data entry errors creating time savings and lower labor costs. The key use of digital marketing is its ability to enable the firms reach and interact with its current customers as well as potential.

According to Senecal and Nantel (2004), people who consult online product reviews purchased the recommended products twice as often as people who do not consult reviews. Online consumer reviews provide a trusted source of product information for consumers and therefore a potentially valuable sales asset. Since online peer reviews can be very beneficial to a company, marketers should determine what motivates consumers to write these reviews. Today's digital generation, are more than willing to write reviews and provide consumer-generated product information (Perez-Latre 2009).

2.3 Theoretical Framework of the Study

There are different theories on digital marketing, each identifying own paradigm and concept about the digital marketing. The study is greatly interested with marketing theories that identify its relationship with the growth of digital marketing and its impact on organizational performance. Highlighted below are some of such theories which include;

2.3.1 The Porter's Five Forces Perspective

The theoretical perspective views competitive advantage as a position of superior performance that a firm achieves through offering cost advantages or benefit advantages (Porter, 1980). This model attributes competitive advantage to the external environmental factors that a firm must respond to such as erecting barriers of entry to competitors, product differentiation, capital requirements, and buyer switching costs (Ladoet *al.*, 2002). The theory says that competition within an industry is determined by five forces namely; rivalry of industry competitors, threat of new entrants, bargaining power of buyers, bargaining power of suppliers, and the threat of substitute products (Porter, 1980). The theory further says that based on the strengths or weaknesses of industry players, the competitive position of individual firms is partly determined, the rest of the external threats notwithstanding. Secondly, prospective new entrants to the industry, the bargaining power of buyers, the bargaining power of suppliers, and threat of substitute products, altogether have a potential of reducing considerably the competitiveness of organizations in the marketplace. Industry structure determines who will capture the value, but a firm is not a complete prisoner of industry structure - firms can influence the five forces through their own strategies.

The five forces framework highlights what is important, and directs managers toward those aspects most important to long-term advantage. In this framework, gaining competitive advantage is determined primarily by responding effectively to industry-specific requirements. The five forces model constitutes a very useful way of thinking about and analyzing the nature of competition within an industry. However, the model presents a static picture of competition which slights the role of innovation and de-emphasizes the significance of individual company differences while overemphasizing the importance of industry and strategic group structure as determinants of company profit rates (Ghemawatet *al.*, 2009).

2.3.2 The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Fred Davis (1989)

The TAM Model was advanced by Davis (1986) and specifically addresses the determinants of computer acceptance among end users. TAM theorizes that an individual's behavioral intention to use a system is affected by two beliefs: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness is the extent to which a person believes that using the system will improve his or her job performance while perceived ease of use is the extent to which a person believes that using the system will be free from error (Venkatesh and Davis, 2010). TAM posits that both beliefs are of primary relevance to computer acceptance behaviors.

The goal of TAM is to provide an explanation of the determinants of computer acceptance that is in general capable of explaining user behavior across a broad range of end-user computing technologies and user populations, while at the same time being both parsimonious and theoretically justified. But because it incorporates findings accumulated from over a decade of IS research, it may be especially well suited for modeling computer acceptance (Welch, & Worthington, 2010).

TAM posits that the intensity of an individual's intention to use a technology can be explained jointly by his or her perception about the technology's usefulness and attitude towards the technology use. Rowley (2011) state that technology should be both easy to learn and easy to use; this implies that perceived ease of use is expected to have a positive influence on users' perception of credibility and intention of using internet marketing.

The TAM Model was adopted since it has a significant contribution on digital marketing framework.

2.4 Empirical Review

Different studies have been carried out in the past by researchers on the concept digital marketing, digital marketing and customer satisfaction, digital marketing impact on firms' performance, and so on.

According to a study carried out by Asama 2014 in Mumbai, India, on understanding the ecosystem in digital media marketing. Total of 200 users of digital tool were collected as sample for study; 146 males and 54 females. Online questionnaire was distributed consisting of 21 questions each. It was observed that Indian customers are highly information seekers.

Advertisements have high impact for creating purchase stimulus though only through opinion leaders. It was seen that more than 90% of the samples are noticing ads, among them 35% of the samples notice ads through online media followed by TVC and newspapers. They can search for more information after seeing an ad online which is the only two way communication channel for customers. Most of the Indians prefer to purchase from a retail shop only, but before going to retail store, they will seek information about the product through an online platform. Brands want to build a cool presence over digital platforms because the customers will do research about the product after seeing an ad or after getting stimulated. It was also perceived that brands (firms) are getting more touch points to reach target group in a cost effective manner.

Another study on “The importance of digital marketing; an exploratory study to find the perception and effectiveness of digital marketing amongst the marketing professionals in Pakistan” by Fawad Khan and Professor Dr Kamran Siddiqui in 2011. The survey examined the perception towards digital marketing for marketing professionals in Pakistan. Although, digital marketing tools and concepts are taking over traditional methods of marketing both locally and international, it is still a new field to professionals operating in Pakistan. According to the survey, professionals are skeptical about the usage of and benefits of digital marketing and have been classified as skeptical. They do consider it as an important tool for promotion but at the same time concerned about the issues of privacy and misleading of information of digital marketing. SMS and MMS are considered as the most important tool for conducting digital marketing which shows lack of understanding and in-depth usage of digital marketing tools by professionals in the field of marketing.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summaries the findings, draws conclusion and recommendations. And they include as follows;

4.1 Summary of Findings

Marketing always has been very important function within every contemporary company. The study found that the WAMCO NG LTD uses different strategies to achieve their marketing objectives and to grow its digital marketing and offer better informed customer service. The

study established that the firm use Search Engine Optimization (SEO), digital advertising, social media marketing in the bid to improve their business process and increase their productivity.

However, for technologies to improve productivity, they must be accepted by intended users. The study found out that the WAMCO NG LTD have been using digital marketing communication and it has enabled the firm to communicate with its local and international customers, avail 24 hour service platform to the customers, availability of online technical support, quick response of inquiries, increase efficiency, reduce cost of communication, improve product and price information. WAMCO NG LTD faces unique competitive strategic challenges arising principally from their operations. They all offer similar products and services and the only way for one to get an edge are to be innovative and differentiate their products and services. The distribution of the firm's product and services has a great impact on the perception of the customers and thus the use of digital marketing has seen the firm reduce waiting time to receive product, lower cost of delivery and reduce the number of customer service representatives. This is true because the target markets are well informed on where and how to access the product.

The study found out that the firm's performance was affected by digital marketing as it enhanced uptake of the firm's products by the consumer, lower costs, lower working capital, increased revenue, increased customer base of the company, increased market share, increased web traffic, lower fixed capital, accelerate cash flows, reduce revenue volatility and reduce risk.

4.2 Conclusion

Sound communication and understanding between the company and the target market is prerequisite for a company to achieve competitive advantage over its rivalries. The study concludes that if businesses want to remain active in the field and maintain a strategic position in today's competitive market, they should use digital marketing platform. The study therefore concluded that WAMCO NG LTD should also choose the methods of digital marketing in a way that is critically important to their goals and anticipations. Likewise through networks new information diffuse opportunities become available through new ideas, access to information and access to more or better resources.

Further the study concluded that management emphasize more on digital marketing as a way to influence customer patronage in organization services hence effective performance of the firm to a great extent.

Digital marketing has become integral part of business and everyday life. Its importance will only grow and it also means that sophistication of digital marketing solutions and particularly sophistication of available solutions for conducting marketing activities also will grow. Understanding of marketing possibilities within digital marketing allows increasing efficiency of Firm's marketing and also maintaining competitive advantages.

The study also concludes that most organization use digital marketing as a promotional campaign where it helps to identify exactly how, when, and where digital marketing influences consumers hence helping executives to craft marketing strategies that take advantage of digital marketing unique ability to engage with customers. Consequently, the study concluded that keeping customers engaged with digital marketing helps the firm enhance uptake of their products by the consumer, lower costs, lower working capital, increased revenue, increased customer base of the bank, increased market share to a great extent.

4.3 Recommendations

The study established that the WAMCO NIGERIA LTD uses digital marketing to compete and improve their performance. It is recommended that the manufacturing firms that have not been using digital marketing to a large extent should do so in order to be competitive and enhance marketing performance since information technology innovation is born through ideas and relevant information.

The study recommends that nowadays without adoption of digital marketing, organization could not perform as per expectations due to competition in the market thus it's a vital tool for competitive advantages.

Additionally, the study recommended that promotional campaign should be emphasized more on digital marketing since the age group in those sites constitutes the people with interest in tasting the new brands of the product or services and they can only access the information online as they look for their preferences. Consequently, the study recommended that feedback information from the customers should be strictly accessed so as to sort out the information that aims at improving

the organization performance since some of the information that may stream in to the firm may be provided by the competitors to mislead the firm hence failure to realization of the firms' goal. The study recommends that promotional experts (customer experience executives) should be very well trained on how to use digital marketing strategies to ensure customer patronage and retention. Finally, organizations should budget appropriate fund for their digital marketing activities.

4.3 Limitations of the study/Suggestion for further studies

The major limitation of the study revolves around the fact that this study was basically theoretical in nature and so did not give room to sample respondents' opinion. The narrow and specific focus of this study means the conclusions are limited to manufacturing firms only and may not translate to other industry and national contexts.

The study suggests that further studies should replicate the study on other industries other than manufacturing firms. Also future studies should incorporate testable data to the study.

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