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MARKETING - THE INESCAPABLE END OF ALL ACTIVITIES

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ABSTRACT

Marketing has become inescapable and has evolved with time; it's everywhere and today technology has helped expand marketing by creating greater customer choice and promises to provide almost limitless choices for customers. This study discusses the reasons behind the un-avoidable ads and marketing gimmicks. The study is based on understanding the effective of marketing, in addition the challenges faced with the progress and transformation of technology in the world of marketing. This study is performed via mixed research approach. It comprises of qualitative and quantitative research approach. The target of this study is consumers who purchase fast moving consumer goods. An online questionnaire survey was conducted, participated by 100 consumers to determine what the public's opinion on the subject. The questionnaire questions were structured design related to the topic of marketing strategies and the most effective approach when marketing is desired. There are also face to face interview for the group focus findings. Based on the obtained result, this study concluded that if marketing had not existed, there would be multiple repercussions that would lead to the deduction that a world with marketing would be more favorable.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid increased in technology, and environmental changes have resulted in stiff competition among different business [1-3]. According to Sandhusen [4], the rapid progress in technology has led to increase in business entries, but has also led to increase in high product quality and differentiation. Sandhusen asserts that product differentiation gives consumers a wide range of choice to choose from in a given market [4]. According to Blythe [5], consumers tend to choose or to remain loyal to different brands that they are familiar to them. Blythe [5] asserts that a business that want to operate for a long time must, therefore, maintain customer loyalty through maintain strong brand.

Research by Sandhusen [4] and Blythe [6], therefore, agrees that marketing is the most important way of maintaining or enhancing a business brand. As a matter of fact, both Sandhusen [4] and Blythe [6] agree that marketers are forced to find a direct method of that they can use to communicate with their clients. According to Craig and Douglas [7], the only direct method that a business can use to enhance customer loyalty is through direct marketing. Craig and Douglas [7] agree that marketing is not only becoming an indispensable aspect of every business existence, but also an inescapable activity. Once a business is established, marketing becomes an important segment of its existence [7].

According to Craig and Douglas [7], in an attempt to strengthen their brand, marketers often engage in more than one advertisement at given time. The more business compete the more they put more adverts, as a result, the number of advertisement have increased by a significant number [8]. According to Savitt [8], technological progress has also facilitated the use of marketing. Savitt [8] asserts that due to technological progress, many marketers use technological tools such as email marketing and social networking. As a result, the numbers of advertisement have increased and continue to increase daily [8].

According to Sahaf [9], marketing campaign deeply affects factors including the attitude, motives, brand choices and intentions in the purchase decision of a consumer. Sahaf [9] asserts that cultural and sub cultural groups have their distinctive consumption patterns that provide essential determinant basis to the marketers. According to Sahaf [9], cultural trends have considerable implications for market segmentations, branding, product development, advertising, packaging and product featuring. Therefore, a good marketer should never contradict the cultural values in products, price, distribution and promotion. Craig and Douglas [7] agree with Sahaf [9] and assert further that marketing campaign can be unsuccessful if businesses are unaware of certain cultural differences.

Despite the fact that many studies have been conducted on the effect of marketing on consumers' culture and buying habit, there still exists conflicting views on the findings of these studies [10-12]. For instance, while John Blythe [6] asserts that marketing may not be feasible when explaining the changes in cultural behaviours and consumption behavior, Craig and Douglas [7] insist that marketing plays a vital role in affecting consumers' cultures and perception of a brand. Therefore, the wide gaps between these findings call for a study that might reduce or clarified the gap.

According to Sandhusen [4], marketing has become integrated in consumers life worldwide, and differences in usage have become manifest. Sandhusen [4] asserts that increasing spending power of customers globally runs parallel to increasing choice. According to Sahaf [9], life skills are becoming marketing skills. Sahaf [9] observes that marketing has become the expertise of designing the process whereby consumers imagine, experience, and construct meaningful and substantive mode of life. In regards to this, Sahaf [9] agrees

that several principles of marketing have transformed and transcended in such a way that they have become fully integrated into consumers' life.

Craig and Douglas [7] agree that the marketing is change from a distinct form of activity of incorporated entities to everyday practices of all corporeal activities. Craig and Douglas [7] explain that the change in cultural and consumer behavior have also facilitated the integration of marketing into consumers' life. According to Craig and Douglas [7], as consumers continue to interact on a global scale, their taste and preference becomes more and more customized and complex. The complexity in the consumption pattern forces marketers to come up with strategies that match customers' needs; thus making their marketing campaign integrate into consumers' life. According to Blythe [6], complexity in consumption behavior is one of the main reasons why marketing has become integrated in consumers' life.

Adequate researches have been conducted in this area; however, many of these studies concentrates only on how marketing campaigns have integrated in consumers lives but does not explain why marketing has formed part of consumers' life. Therefore, this study identifies how marketing affects culture and buying habits and determines the reasons of marketing that become integrated in a consumers' life.

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology outlines the research process and measure to obtain the data. Both qualitative and quantitative researches are used in many studies, including science and the social sciences. This study will be performed via a mixed research approach. It will comprise of qualitative and quantitative research approach.

Qualitative

Qualitative research concerned with complete and detailed descriptions of events. Therefore a mini-focus group consisting of three participants was conducted.

Quantitative

Quantitative research analyzed the aspects of the world in mathematically. The data collection in this study has been done by using online questionnaire survey. To ascertain the viewpoint of the general public, a survey was designed and distributed online. The designed questions are all marketing-related questions. This study used online survey platform namely monkeysurvey.com. Also, the sample of this study would be the 100 consumers from Jeddah.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Survey Findings

Based on the results of the survey shown in Figure 1, it was deduced that the two most common things that come to mind when people think of marketing are "Advertising" and "Creativity" at 31 % and 21 % respectively, while the two least thought of words were "Manipulation" and "Fraud" at 9% and 4% respectively. This could lead to the assumption that people do indeed see the good in marketing, seeing as they associate it with "creativity" and not with bad qualities such as fraud.

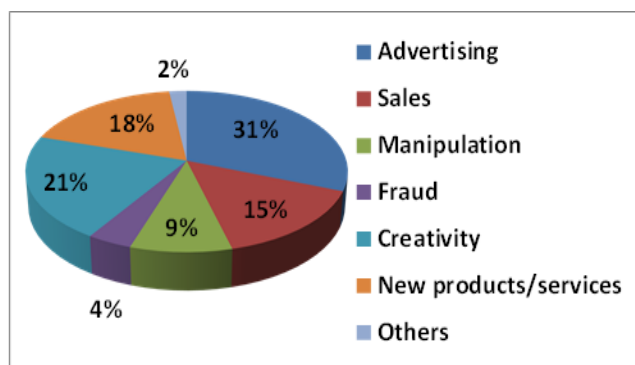


Figure 1: Respondent’s opinions regarding the question “What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about marketing?”

When asked what would happen should there no longer be any form of marketing in the world, more than half of the respondents answered that "People will not get information about products/services" at 56% (Figure 2). In contrast, the two least chosen options were "The world will be a better place" and "life will be simpler" at 4% and 7% respectively. So since these were the least chosen options, it seems only a small percentage of people see less marketing as a good thing. Also, it can be seen that people do understand that it plays a monumental role in keeping consumers informed.

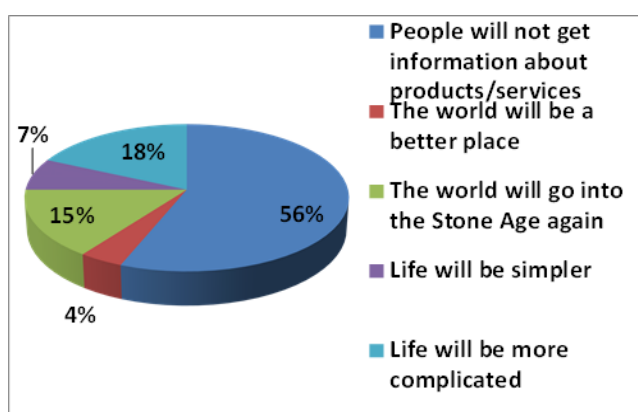


Figure 2: Respondent’s opinions regarding the question “In your opinion, if there is NO marketing in the world, what is likely to happen?”

When asked to discuss a scenario of a world where marketing does not exist, 87% claimed that the economy as a whole would suffer greatly whereas the rest (13%) believe that it would be better off (Figure 3). This result may lead to the assumption that the public is becoming wiser and more aware which could explain why such a huge fraction was able to look at the big picture as opposed to just considering the negative side to marketing.

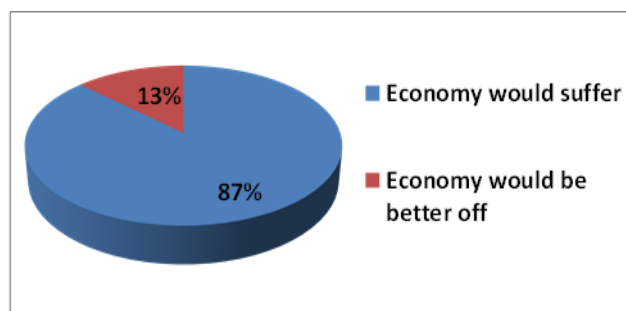


Figure 3: Respondent's opinions regarding the question "In your own words, briefly discuss the scenario of a world without Marketing"

The findings of this closed-ended survey questions were rather unanticipated since this concludes that most of the subjects do not in fact see marketing as a form of exploitation. On the contrary, as opposed to the expected results, the participants seem to believe the world would be worse off without marketing.

Focus Group Findings

There are three interviewees participated in the focus group finding section. The questions are all marketing, products and consumer related. The first question is describes marketing in three words. The first respondent describes marketing as ideas, creativity, and competition. The second respondent describes marketing as advertising, selling, and talking. The third respondent describes marketing as creativity portraying a message, communication, and attracting.

The second question is the opinions of the respondents on which product or brand that don't need marketing in any form. The first respondent claims none of any product or does brand do not required marketing, as every product has to be advertised and introduced to the public in a way or another. The second respondent claims commodities don't need marketing in any form, because they are very essential. The third respondent gives an example "Pepsi", because it has already established itself and its name strongly in the market. If they keep going with their quality level, they're fine.

The third question is identifies any six major activities of marketing. The first respondent outlines the six major activities of marketing are raise competition between competitors, creativity, come up with different unique ideas, promoting, awareness, an ability to persuade and convince people. The second respondent identifies the six major activities of marketing as develops strategies to sell a product, think of ways to help it market better, revive brands, coming up with innovative methods to make products appeal more than competitors, study demographics aggressively, and be aware of trends. The third respondent suggests the six major activities of marketing are brainstorming, analysis, great amount of teamwork, advertisement, thinking outside the box, and dealing with a lot of people.

The fourth question required the interviewees to highlight the major benefits they ever get as consumers from marketing activities. The first respondent

claims that knowing what's in the market and comparing products. The second respondent said seasonal sales "deals", finding out better products, have the ability to find whatever need (information) in the most a short simple way. The third respondent claims being introduced to new products, look at people's creativity and it encourages customers to buy.

The fifth question required the interviewees to highlight the drawbacks they had face as consumers from marketing activities. The first respondent said deception, repeated products, and as for sales people doing a marketing activity in Saudi Arabia especially in the cosmetics field, sales representatives lack professional approach they immediately give you the impression of being too desperate and in need for you to buy their product. The second respondent claims for false advertising, annoying my eyes with over marketing "shoving the product down my throat", and overwhelming. The third respondent claims deception, the feeling of being bombarded by ads, and it ads confusion.

The sixth question shows the opinion of the interviewees towards how the technology effected marketing in anyway. The first respondent claims yes of-course, social networks and sites had a major impact in the marketing field with commercials appearing everywhere from text messages, to pop ups on our computer screen which effected the advertising market and increased it. The second respondent claims it has in a huge way, by helping marketers get to wider audience quicker and cheaper. The third respondent claims yes, as more channels to place ads plus more ways to create ads.

The seventh question illustrates the important of marketing towards the company. The first respondent claims that, nowadays marketing has a huge impact. Every company must have a marketing department to reach success and survive. The second respondent highlights that marketing is important towards new started company. With the help of marketing, more people can get know to them and they could know about their future customers. The third respondent said companies most probably cannot live without marketing, as people need to know and be attracted to the product/service as well as, remind people of the many features.

The last question required the interviewees to suggestions for marketers. The first respondent suggested come up with new modem ideas, and stop repeating. The second respondent suggested identifies the audience, be up to date on all knew technology, and determine the competition. The third respondent suggested become creative and make customer wanted to buy the product.

In overall, the discussion on the focus group findings answers was generally similar as participants find marketing as an innovative creative field where they portray and communicate with their target market through research, as well as to eliminate competitors. When it comes to using marketing in any form one of the participants mentioned an example of a global company "Pepsi" as stated that Pepsi already achieved their goal and had a sustainable market share from all the marketing they have done decades ago, other participants disagreed by stating that if they stopped marketing "Coca Cola" and other soft drink companies will take over. Pepsi still got recognition and

high sales because of bold marketing strategies. Pepsi still kept on marketing even after decades of being on top and spending huge amounts of money because it was in their benefit. As nowadays marketing has become so wide spread that all participants agreed on that it has become so overwhelming, in addition to false expectations that perceives them after some marketing activities. All companies and businesses must continue to market their products as the business world is in its peak, a lot of competitors and products are available that costumers can easily convey.

Recommendations

Based on the obtained survey result, this study would like to recommend some ideas that allow marketing formed part of consumers' life. First is marketers should emphasis on advantages of over-existing ways of marketing. Secondly, while keeping in mind budget constraints and credibility issues, marketers should use the Word-of-Mouth (WOM) approach where applicable. This should be endorsed and synchronized with a complete marketing campaign using various mediums. Third, individuals having high social profiles should be used as opinion leaders and reference groups in order to spread marketing information. Fourth, marketers should keep a track of trends, technologies especially the mobile field, as people nowadays are so attached to their devices. Being up to date will help to figure out different, tradable ways to attract consumers. Lastly, more emphasis should be given to alternative marketing through social media networks.

CONCLUSION

Marketing is an innovative creative field where it portrays and communicates with a target market through research, as well as to eliminate competitors. When it comes to using marketing in any form whether an organization has already achieved their goal, has recognition and high sales, as well as, a sustainable market share from all the marketing they have done decades ago. It is essential for the organization to continue to market their products as the business world is in its peak, a lot of competitors and products are available that costumers can easily convey to. Added to the previous point, competitors will take this advantage to penetrate or take a bigger market share. As nowadays marketing has become so wide spread that it has become so overwhelming, in addition to false expectations that perceives consumers after some marketing activities. Lastly, it is important to see beyond the vague exterior of marketing that could befuddle many people into believing it is entirely immoral and harmful.

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