



APPRAISING THE IMPACT OF MEDIA PLANNING, MIXING AND APPLICATION IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVERTISING PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined media planning, mixing and application in Public Relations and Advertising practice. Today, society's mode of communication has long moved from the traditional interpersonal communication to that of modern mass communication, where large heterogeneous and scattered audiences are the target. Organizations involved in the production of either goods or services also advertise as well as use public relations tools as a means of reaching their audiences. Core attention is focused on the various forms of media of advertising and public relations, the paper also reviewed concepts such as media, public relations and advertising. The information processing theory was used to properly anchor the paper. The paper concludes that media planning and media mixing are essential ingredients of the overall Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). The paper recommends that organizations should engage more qualified PR and Ad practitioners, in order to bring innovative ideas on how the image of the organization and acceptability of their products or services could be boosted. Organizations should know that public relations is not a smoke screen to cover bad deeds, as a result of which they should not wait until there is a negative turning point before they do the right thing. Similarly, companies should not involve themselves in advertising bad products or services; rather, advertising should be used to promote marketability of their good products and (or) services.

INTRODUCTION

At the heart of public relations and advertising practice are media planning and media mixing as part of the overall Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). No organization, whether profit or non profit, in this modern time can survive without resort to the effective use of public relations and advertising. This is because, no one can tell another's story better than the one concerned. PR and Ad spend form part of the overall budget any organization wishing to stand out should plan towards if such an organization must actualize its dream. Corroborating this, Tellis (2005) notes that media budget constitutes the largest part of all advertising and public relations expenditure. Besides

this, development and improvement of new media and novel tools for media performance-assessment are effecting changes in media planning in all considered fronts. Accentuating the foregoing is the concept of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) which has become a popular parlance and 'way of life' in the advertising and public relations practice in modern times (Kitchen et al, 2004). The integration proposed by the IMC model, in specific terms, has direct relationship with integration in media planning and application, which implies that changes necessitated by IMC are more often than not likely to impinge on media planning. You cannot talk of a successful media planning without an effective media mixing. A lot of decision making are usually made regarding media buying for the purpose of executing advertising and public relations campaigns that can be considered all inclusive.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Media

Media in the context of mass communication means the channels through which messages meant for a large, scattered and divergent audience are made available to them. We can also say that media means the vehicles that carry mass communication messages to a large heterogeneous audience. Shedding more light on this, Osunbiyi (2001) writes that media for advertising (and public relations) are newspaper, magazine, radio television billboard and the internet. Akande (1999) explains that an understanding of the media as well as their policies will help a practitioner in achieving his information dissemination goals. He should as a matter of fact study the overall activities of relevant media houses in order to know their dos and don'ts.

Important information about media a PR or Ad practitioner should acquaint himself with according to Akande (1999) are: (1) Editorial Policy: This deals with the decision of the management on what to accept for publication and what not to accept. (2) Frequency of Publication: We have the dailies, weekly, by-weekly, monthly by-monthly, quarterly or even yearly. (3) Copy Date: Time and day when materials for publication are received and subsequently taken to the press. (4) Ownership Structure: knowledge of who calls the shot is fundamental. This is because; the editorial policy is usually rooted in the philosophy behind the setting up of the publication. (5) Circulation: Is the paper a local, regional or a national one? Knowledge of the number of copies the paper sells per edition is important (6) Audience Demographic Study: You



need to know something about the audiences' sexes, income, level of education and social status.

Public Relations

Every organization has a number of persons or groups that it interacts with, such persons or groups could be either internal or external publics, and in most cases both. This is because; no organization can be an island unto itself, as long as such an organization is out to do business. Baran (2010) notes that Public Relation means different things, depending on the context of application. According to him, "it can be and is many things: publicity, research, public affairs, media relations, promotion, merchandising and more". World Assembly of Public Relations as cited in Oyekola (2007) defines Public Relations as "the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizations' leaders and implementing planned programmes of action which will serve both the organizations and public interest". Ngwokor (2014) adds that public relations is all deliberate and positive efforts put in place by an organization, aimed at effectively communicating with the various publics to ensure mutual understanding between it and the publics, in order to actualize and sustain its goals and objectives. Bittner (1989) situates PR as a management function saddled with evaluating public attitudes, identifying the policies and procedures of individuals or organizations with the public interest; planning and executing programmes of action to earn public understanding and acceptance. For Keghku & Melladu (2009), the major task of public relations should be aimed at achieving friendship, understanding, goodwill, good image, loyalty and commitment.

Advertising

Advertising is a concept that has received the attention of several scholars. This acclaimed attention is because of the importance of advertising itself in the world of business, since no organization can survive without reaching out to the current and potential consumers/users of its products/services. Advertising is a complex genre of mass communication which is carried out with certain well defined objectives as well as strategies, targeted at impacting on the audiences in different ways, via feelings and actions (Wells, Moriarty & Burnett, 2006). From the perspective of marketing mix, Onyilo (2013) defines advertising as an integral component of marketing. The scholar explains that the essence of undertaking an advertising campaign is to ensure that the target

consumers are reached, with the aim of increasing the demand for the product or service so advertised. In the same line of thought, Chile (2014) writes that “advertising is an act of making a product or service known for use by means of persuasion through the mass media by known sponsor” (P. 9).

The American Marketing Association as cited in Kotler (2002, p.8) says advertising is any form of non personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods and services by an identified sponsor through the aid of the media. Advertising Practitioners Council of Nigeria as cited in Keghku (2007) defines advertising as “a form of communication through mass media about product, service or idea paid for by an identified sponsor”. For Nwosu & Nkamnebe (2006), advertising like most of the business management practices, is like war in more ways than one. Like war, it has to do with winning the battles, and this requires that the advertising agency and his client must aspire to outplay, outshine and overcome the opponents in the war. By ‘war’, the scholars are referring to their competitors in the business arena.

Media Planning: Strategizing for Effective PR and Ad Campaign

An advertising and public relations practitioner worth his onion should ask himself: what media combination will best do the job at hand? Providing the answer to this critical question is fundamental to a successful campaign. Kanfman as cited in Chile (2014) writes that media strategy is part of the overall marketing mix, while marketing plan on the other hand lays the foundation upon which a company’s operating plans rest. Both advertising campaign and public relations efforts are strategies that are approached using a well thought out media mix, in order to achieve the desired result. Media planning, otherwise called media strategy, means the planning, scheduling and buying of media in such a way to fulfill both the advertising and marketing goals (Chile, 2014). Since its inception, the focus of media planning as part of the overall advertising and public relations practice has been on the choice between the wide variety of media available and how best to optimize value for money. Hansen and Christiansen (2005) have presented modern developments in the fields of media spend, and they are of the view that the level of market share should determine the budget for an advertising. They posit further that brands with higher market shares have the potential to spend less on advertising, since they most time rely heavily on the current strength of the brand. As for new entrants and smaller brands, they will have to invest more on advertising if they must move up the ladder.



Bogart (2000) avers that a typical media department has undergone serious changes in recent times, shifting from performing all the known media related functions such as buying, planning, execution, and follow-ups to the 'unbundling of media buying and planning'. Rodman (2006) reminds us that the most critical job of the media planner is knowing and deciding the best and most effective media to reach the target market. Based on this, he advises that in media planning, emphasis should be placed on identifying the market profile; and that the media buyer should always have at the back of his mind that 'it is all about prospects, not about listeners or readers'. Depending on the structure on ground, the media department or Ad agency should have knowledge of, and be able to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research, to know and gather relevant demographic and psychographic information regarding the target market. This informs why Ngwokor (2008) explains that social science researches become successful by gathering; analyzing, interpreting and presenting data that appear quantitative and qualitative in nature. Regarding media mixing, Bogart (2000) enthuses that there is no one singular method that can assure success, at the same time, that an eventual reliance on a particular number of formulas could likely be the formula for failure. Affirming the foregoing postulation, Coulter and Sarkis (2005) opine that media planning had in the past so relied on judgment-based decision making. The need to make more formal, these decisions in modern media environments is a problem that involves integration of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to evaluate media efficiency for planning purposes (Tektas and Alakavuk, 2003).

Media Mixing in Public Relations and Advertising Practice

Audiences of mass communication are; as we know, diverse, therefore determining the best means of reaching them could sometimes be herculean. No one media can best do the job of effectively covering the areas intended to cover. This is the reason there is usually the need to combine media forms in both public relations and advertising campaigns, in order to ensure that most members of the target audience are reached. Rodman (2006) sets on record that right from the outset, public relations practitioners have always been consulted to help companies apply the gains of new technology to improve their relationship with their various publics, citing the print media, broadcast media as well as the new media, currently craved for by most advertisers due to its flexibility and accessibility as cases in point. Media constitutes the means through which public relations and advertising are made manifest (Osunbiyi,

2001). Media mix refers to the idea that just one medium cannot do the required job for a particular campaign. In other words, it suggests that there should be an effective combination of selected media to achieve set objective. In a nutshell, media means the channel or vehicle of communication that conveys messages to a large heterogeneous audience. According to Osunbiyi (2001), in every company that care about their public relations, and do advertise, there are a group of personnel in charge of media planning and mixing. These personnel decide the choice of media, placement and monitoring at the right time. This is done by analyzing all the available media to know the most effective for a client's campaign and advising on the ones to go for.

Media of Public Relations and Advertising

As earlier stated, media are the channels through which public relations and advertising campaign are made manifest. Media provide the conduit for passing mass oriented information to the mass audience. Onyilo (2013) identifies the following as the media of public relations and advertising:

1. Print media: Newspapers, magazines, direct mail.
2. Broadcast media: Radio and television.
3. Social media: Internet, mobile phones.
4. Position media: Outdoor and transit advertising.
5. Point of purchase media: A variety of display at the point of purchase.

Onyilo (2013) explains that in placing advertisements in any of the media, the media buyer should be someone versed in media operations and their effectiveness. Such a media buyer negotiates on behalf of his client. He should undertake two types of researches (a) demographic research (b) Competitive intelligence. On media mixing, Warren as cited in Onyilo (2013) identifies the following guideline:

1. A media buyer keeps up to date industry research and distribution figures of newspaper, magazines, and audience figures in radio, television and interactive medium.
2. He should identify the target audience for a particular media campaign and takes decision on how effective to communicate the audience.
3. Liaise and builds relationship with the client and media sales company.
4. He monitors buying strategies available to all the media.
5. He negotiates with the media in order to get the most strategic positions and space in the media.



6. He analyzes the effectiveness of each campaign and uses the result to plan for future campaign.
7. The media buyer prepares costing for the client which guides him on the spending update throughout the campaign.

In choosing the media, Norris (1984) lists five questions in the media mix which a practitioner should answer, and they are:

1. Who are your customers? What do they look like? Where do you find them concentrated?
2. How much money can you afford to spend?
3. How often should you advertise, and how much? Is your product seasonal?
4. What kind of media are your competitors using? Are you in danger of being forced into "second class" position in certain media because they can outspend you?
5. What kind of product or service do you have for sale? Is it something that looks good? Does it lend itself to demonstration?

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on *Information processing theory* which was formulated in 1968 by Williams J. McGuire. According to Asemah (2011), the theory holds that attitude change in an individual goes through six stages:

1. Persuasive message must be communicated.
2. The receiver will attend to the message.
3. The receiver will comprehend the message.
4. The receiver will yield to; and is convinced by the argument presented.
5. The newly adopted position is retained.
6. The desired behavior takes place.

This theory is relevant to this paper because the end target of any communication endeavour is to compel a desired action.

CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the place of media planning and mixing in public relations and advertising practice through the study of various literatures on the subject matter. The conclusion of the study is that without proper planning, no successful media campaign can ever be achieved. Moreover, the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is seen as an approach that ensures effective action plan to be adopted by any advertising and public relations practitioner who wishes to succeed in the industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Arising from the study, the following recommendations are made with the hope that if adopted, companies would reap the benefit thereof:

- 1) Organizations that wish to maintain their share of the market should see advertising and public relations as a critical component of their overall integrated marketing communication.
- 2) Media planning and mixing require that the right combination of both the print and broadcast media should be made in terms of media buying.
- 3) Apart from the in-house advertising and public relations departments usually created by management, companies should also have on their pay roll external firms or agencies that should handle certain jobs for them.
- 4) Companies should engage more qualified PR and Ad Practitioners, in order to bring innovative ideas on how the image of the company and acceptability of their products or services could be boosted.
- 5) Organizations should know that public relations is not a smoke screen to cover bad deeds, as a result of which they should not wait until there is a negative turning point before they do the right thing. Similarly, companies should not involve themselves in advertising bad products or services, rather, advertising should be used to promote marketability of their good products or services.

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