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# **Impact of effective online brand advertisements on consumer attitude**

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## **Abstract**

With the recent developments in technology, advancements have seen the incorporation of the internet into business enterprises as a marketing tool. This has been made prominent in the recent years, where social media has taken over global advertisements with both small and large companies channeling their efforts to have their products and services marketed to consumers through social media platforms. Analyzing all the factors at play, it has become of essence for growth oriented strategists to give laser focus to the attitudes, needs and feelings of consumers towards their online brand advertisements. In a nutshell, the argument revolves around the significant turnarounds that if harnessed in the operations can created a domino effect on consumer choice of brand. This paper looks at the impact of effective online brand advertisements on consumer attitudes, achieved in a detailed discussion sub-divided into sections that encompass the introduction, the strategies and theories in online marketing as well as predictors of consumer attitudes.

**Key words:** *online brand advertisements, consumer, social media, consumer behavior, business.*



## **1. Introduction**

For any growth oriented organization, it is critical to comprehend that consumers are at the heart of productivity. Every product or service released into the market becomes beneficial to the company upon consumer intervention, otherwise there would be no motivation to even produce in the first place. Based on the shift in the global business sphere which is now characterized by vicious competition, it has become necessary to re-strategize in advertising to effectively harness and retain larger consumer bases (Alhabash, Mundel & Hussain, 2017). Coupling this up with the rapid developments in the technological sector that have transitioned the world into a global village, the old school field advertisement system has proven ineffective for global oriented enterprises. In other words, it has become more convenient to use online social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many others for marketing in the quest to establish globally recognized brands. In order to achieve the desired results, producers have deemed it necessary to consider the behavior and thought patterns of consumers before, during and after viewing of online advertisements. This research seeks to explicate the impact of effective online brand advertisements on consumer attitude and responses to given products and services.

## **2. Evolution of Online Advertisements**

Looking at the dynamics in business operations, it is of essence to understand the shift in online advertisements in relation to the ever changing customer needs. The fact is, generations forever change and the methods that may have yielded results in the past centuries become outdated and can no longer appeal to the new age of millennials, hence the need for organizations to comprehend the online advertisement industry from yester years and today so as to have a prospective look on future expectations (Alhabash, Mundel & Hussain, 2017). On the onset, before the emergence of media channels and the internet, organizations relied heavily on billboards, newspapers, magazines, posters and flyers to market their products in physical locations targeting consumers. This method faced a major drawback as it could not avail the interactive privilege to consumers, thus difficult to channel feedback to producers. Then, came



the age of TVs and Radios that improve the advertisement arenas as through satellite frequencies larger consumer bases could be netted.

Innovation of the internet became the game changer in the advertisement business as through World Wide Web services, companies that wished to amass global influence managed to build their brands (Zeff & Aronson, 1999). Advertisement was made possible by use of ad clicks alongside web banners that were designed to appeal to internet user's interest informing them of trendy products and services. Finally, the innovation of social media platforms which have revolutionized the advertisement industry. This came upon realization that many users had embraced the social media platforms which availed connection of billions of individuals from all corners of the globe. Marketers have taken advantage of these platforms, creating pages and group that showcase their products as a branding advertisement strategy, which if properly used has been realized to yield impeccable results (Chu, Kamal & Kim, 2013).

### **3. Advertisements and Consumer Contention**

Based on how easy it has become to advertise, the world has become congregated with advertisements, especially on social media platforms hence the need for growth oriented companies to re-evaluate the strategies they use to market their products, lest they wind up in the ignored categories of social media users. For instance, users could be trying to communicate with loved ones via Facebook and then be toggled to like pages that they have no interest in. The next day, same trend and in the end these users become irritated and opt to ignore or in the worst case block the advertisement pages, developing a very negative attitude which could be very consequential to companies aiming to grow and establish brands recognized on the world wide scale. Importantly also, looking at the saturated advertisements being hassled into consumers' everyday lives, most have adopted a negative attitude meaning that consumers may discard advertisements of products and services they may be in need of solely based on past unrewarding experiences (Chu, Kamal & Kim, 2013).

According to Chu, Kamal & Kim (2013) the internet the trend has grown worse, with click advertisements standing in the way of surfing where websites have had to trick individuals



to click links they are not interested in but as an attempt to yield more traffic, to have companies pay. This has in turn created bad advertisement attitudes on the part of consumer who even prefer old school methods in attempt to escape the hassles encountered when seeking to view products online. In a nutshell, the clustered advertisers need to reconsider the tactic they use on online users, embracing user appropriate mechanisms like the use of sponsored features on social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

Based on the aforementioned setbacks, it is important for advertisers to come up with effective methods that can appeal to the consumers eliminating the pressure they face. The following avenues can therefore be effectively utilized to achieve the desired goal:

### **1. Online Advertising**

Upon the realization that many people spend a lot of time on the internet, advertisers sought to explore online advertisement channels in an effort to ensure that they net more consumers. Advertisement in this approach was initially made by use of banner ads alongside search ads, which when clicked redirect users to marketer's pages. This was done in the quest to create globally recognized brands, which through being advertised over online means were expected to gain popularity amongst consumers (McCoy et al, 2007; Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). The efforts paid off as brands that took this path including; Coca-Cola and Nivea amassed a lot of influence on the global sphere to become international brands worth emulation. Recent statistics show that most successful globally recognized organizations had to invest a lot of resource in this marketing journey, which eventually paid off creating iconic multinationals in business enterprises (McCoy et al. 2007). Motivated by these success stories many companies have over time embraced this approach in order to capture more consumers instigating growth in business operations.

As the trigger point for modern advertisements, online marketing has proven to be a very effective tool which if used strategically can help create good consumer-producer relationships (Yan et al. 2009). Furthermore, through enabling feedback features on websites, it has become more effective for users to make even better judgements before purchasing services and products



as clarifications can be made instantly. On the flipside, search engines have also played a major role in customer targeting whereby instead of targeting everybody, companies can monitor search traffics and forward advertisements that correspond with consumer needs. This in turn creates efficiency hence saving time on both the consumer because banners focus on individual needs (Zeff & Aronson, 1999).

This medium bears immense capabilities as it offers access to a large number of users. However failure to design consumer oriented banners and ads, will push them away, hindering progress. The truth is that, as visual beings many people subconsciously develop interest in and choose products that appear good and vice versa, hence it is essential for companies to comprehend that, investing in visually appealing and easy to navigate ads and banners is the secret ingredient towards drawing more customers. Consequently, there is the issue of foreseeability of the advertisements based on choice of themes as well as what it is that they represent. Good features will create good opinions which will create trust in brand as consumers would always prefer well organized and easy to navigate sites (Thompson, 1995).

More often than not, consumers get hooked on given brands just to lose interest after few weeks, a major blow to producer companies. This trend is also experienced in online ads, where once interested parties lose attention and choose to ignore and block the ads deeming the unnecessary and irritating. To address this challenge, advertisers should carry out research to guideline the ads laying emphasis on trending issues which consumers can relate to. In addition, a consumer centered approach should be used where disturbing pop-ups should be replaced with interesting catch phrases and banners. Looking at the Jupiter's research, where internet users were interviewed the findings indicate that more than 65% of the respondents confirmed that they hate ad pop ups that cover their browsing pages, which they do not click (Yan, Liu, Wang, Zhang, Jiang, & Chen, 2009).

## **2. Social media**

Social media platforms were initially intended to connect people with loved ones and bridge the geographical limitations that made it difficult to convey information over larger



scopes. Like wildfire, social media platforms have spread to become key aspects of people's lives. Younger generations have embraced social media usage more with the older generation making significant steps not be left behind using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat among others as the platforms to network with friends and family. According to Mangold & Faulds (2009), marketers in the recent years evaluated the market and saw an opportunity which they sought to exploit; the larger number of users could also be used to feedback on products as well as facilitate spread of new produce as quickly as the marketers intended. The next challenge became branding where marketers through garnering larger follower numbers are tasked with delivery of promised products lest bad reviews from dissatisfied customers hinder goal achievement.

Social media usage thrives in relationship building, where marketers are able to engage the target consumers getting information on the feelings and attitudes in regard to services offered. By so doing, adjustments can be made based on the feedback garnered making social media a very important tool (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Moreover purchasing has become more efficient as online interactions save the physical hassles consumers would have encountered if they instead walked into shops. In other words social media platforms assist the consumers have a voice in the quality of products, as open dialogue is held with marketers making it easier to draw common ground. Consumers get to appreciate the producer's capacity and efforts while on the other hand producers get insight on the needs of customers.

In as much social media advertisement was initially very effective, things took a different turn when it became clustered just like the traditional methods. On the onset based on how easy it was to create groups and push them upon social media platform like Facebook and Twitter, it lost its intended business factor and once again advertisements became outdated and eventually people lost interest in advertisements. For already established brands there was not much of a problem but for new entrants the impact of the same proved catastrophic (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Nobody could trust new businesses propelled by these social media platforms as everybody was in it not for consumers or the business aspect but so that they could look cool. Over time this dilemma has set many businesses at a disadvantage, where you have something

that can be of very vital significance to you but it cannot be based on the bad reputation people associate it with.

Despite social media platforms being very instrumental in marketing, it is evident that the intended branding and marketing goal was not achieved. To have better insight on the same it is of significance to have a look at theoretical perspectives.

### *Source Credibility Theory*

Based on judgement from the perspective of the consumer on matters brand accuracy, fairness and completeness. It emphasizes the essence of knowledge management and control in business grounded on the fact that consumers assume the reliability of a product or service solely on the aforementioned factors. This framework the purchase decisions meaning if they were satisfied with the advertisement they can go ahead to purchase products otherwise shoddy advertisements steer them away. In social media marketing thereby marketers have the mandate to invest in advertisement using the expertise of creative designers to come up with banners, logos and advertisements that consumers can find credible enough. The assumption going through the consumer's line of thought is simple, if the marketer cannot invest in advertising there are higher chances the product does not meet the advertised standard (Chu, Kamal & Kim, 2013).

Alternatively, source credibility looks at the consumer marketer relationship as a new challenge for both that needs to be cultivated. Take an instance of a person taking his fridge to a repair workshop. There is a very high likelihood that the man would prefer somebody they are conversant with, who may have even assisted fix other electronics, than rushing to a new one who happens to have opened a repair shop recently (Thompson, 1995). Instead of opening more avenues for disappointment, it is human nature to seek where trust has already been fostered. That is the reason majority of consumers today will choose to trust advertisements made by the use of newspapers and magazines as compared to social media platforms, where is a higher risk of being conned.



Notably, the theory presents trust and source credibility as the major issues (Thompson, 1995). However being that the internet is a strange place, where anything is possible consumers have learnt lessons and heard stories from peers all advocating for source credibility verification. Changing dynamics and introduction of online money transfer as well as banking has made matters worse as now people end up scammed over social media channels hence the alertness and second guessing of products. For upcoming companies it is evident that there are trust related challenges whereby consumers shy away from online advertised products, letting go of favorable deals that they feel are intended to lure them into being scammed and losing their money (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008). The truth is people are extra careful these days, and for a company to convince consumers of credibility, trust harnessing efforts have to be made including exploring other avenues of advertisement markedly Newspapers first, before going for social media marketing.

Significantly, by marketers creating professional social media accounts and channels it becomes easy to traverse the competitive business storms that play a major role in chinking credibility (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Twitter has taken the initiative to create official channel features, where the real accounts bear blue ticks distinguishing them from ghost accounts. Marketers have been realized to realize the essence of credibility some going an extra mile to use celebrities to aid in tweeting and “hash tagging” their accounts as legit eliminating consumer worry that they could be unknowingly be communicating with individuals with malicious intentions. To sum up this theory is the aspect of advertorials, whereby companies have chosen newspaper and magazine formats to create their banners and ads, as users are more conversant with them, hence likely to create trust.

### *Persuasion Knowledge Model*

This theory revolves around the idea that the way a consumer thinks of advertisement is governed by the extent of knowledge the consumer has as far as advertisement is concerned. This is to say that it all depends on how well consumers can be persuaded to choose a specific product based on their comprehension on what advertisement entails. For instance by understanding the goals, expectations and strategies that marketers may be using a consumer can either choose or



derail from using a given product or service. The mantra behind this theory maintains that, the more informed a consumer is regarding given advertisement procedures alongside goals, the less likely it is for such a consumer to be persuaded into accepting the product or service. In other words, comprehension of underlying methodologies inhibits acceptance (Vollmer & Precourt, 2008).

Focusing on the vast knowledge surrounding advertisement where, advertisers are supposed to create enthusiasm in consumers and then allow consumer curiosity take over the wheel. A challenge that emerges in this context is that informed target consumers are already conversant with the persuasion model. They know the process. As a result, they choose to ignore advertisers efforts manifested through banners reverting to enjoying their social media catching up with their loved ones. Importantly, by consumers receiving numerous pop up advertisements and ads marketing given products, they get used to the advertisement patterns knowing when to expect them and how they are conveyed. Armed with this familiarity mindset, consumers become experts in avoiding the advertisements that they consider a nuisance to their browsing experiences (Clow, 2004). This can further be explained by the YouTube ads that most consumers have indicated that they are always waiting for skip options.

#### **4. Native Advertising**

Native advertising is the alternative approach which seeks to address all the consumer related challenges associated with the other advertisement channels. Defined as an advertisement technique used on social media platforms where ads are made to sync with the entities of that platform, Native advertising represents the feature incorporated in social media platforms that allows sponsored advertisements (Wojdyski & Evans, 2016; Chu et al. 2013). Regarded as the most effective consumer centered approach, Native advertising takes into consideration the social media usage of users minimizing interruptions and pop ups that irritate. The advantage of using this method is that it helps distinguish serious organizations from fraudsters who are unlikely to go the extra mile of paying to have their products advertised. On the other hand



research has indicated that many consumers prefer to click sponsored or promoted advertisements based on the non-intrusive way in which the advertisements are made, where tricks are not used to lure unsuspecting users to clicking links they have no interest in (Wojdyski& Evans, 2016).

Conveniently, having yielded positive results for so many times, consumers have developed trust in marketers that use this method, meaning they have better consumer netting chances as compared to counterparts. Furthermore, grounding our argument on the aspect of source credibility, companies aligning themselves to this approach are regarded as genuine amongst consumers looking at the trouble they undergo before underpinning advertisements. In addition, Native ads exhibit secure avenues for consumer-marketer conversation where clarifications are made and the products offered showcased, nevertheless, as the sponsored advertisements are likely to capture a larger number of consumers emphasis is put on the responses given (Wojdyski& Evans, 2016). As a result the marketers have to be professionals who understand business dynamics creating a friendly environment for informative conversation. This model boosts brand familiarity.

## **5. Predictors of consumer attitude towards online advertisement**

Consumer attitudes do not just crop up without having frameworks, there exists forces that push potential consumers to act the way they do in regards to online marketed brands. The predictors include;

### **1. Usability**

We live in a world where education has been at the center score of life being hailed from all directions. Introduction of online and social media advertisements is propelled by the assumption that social media users are literate and somehow understand the dynamics of business (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). The issue that arises is that the more educated and informed people are the lower the chances of them being attracted to advertisements as they understand all the lure-techniques that can be used to influence consumers towards given products, thereby avoiding them. On the other hand by having individuals who have very little understanding of

the goal behind online marketing, they would just view the ads for entertainment purposes if funny or cancel ad pop ups that they deem insignificant as they resolve back to their browsing (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013).

Evidently also, it is critical to note that the main problem people click ads is to get more information about something, the curiosity to find out more in regards to certain products or services. The truth is that people's circumstances differ greatly impacting their response to given ads. For instance in areas where data for surfing is expensive people would prefer to ignore advertisement ads and banners as they deem the webpage redirection as data consuming, hence doing everything in their power to minimize costs that they had very well not planned for in the beginning. Usability thereby acts as a major player behind the behaviors towards brands advertised through online channels.

## 2. Trust

This predictor is founded in alignment to the aforementioned theory, source credibility. The logic behind trust and consumer advertisement attitudes is simple, if it happens that consumers have faith and have garnered trust in online advertisers, they develop positive attitudes towards advertisements (McCoy et al. 2007). A further extension of the trust is on the users' comfortability with computer systems and their comprehension of how the internet has been used to generate the advertisements showcased over online media. In other words, instead of the consumers assuming that the advertisements are computer generated and ignoring them, understanding that online marketing is a business oriented advertisement just like the rest is the first step towards building trust in the approach.

## 3. Information

Consumers' attitude is determined by the magnitude of information at their disposal. Where shallow details are revealed consumers feel that information is being withheld intentionally probably to hide facts about products or services that advertisers do not want consumers to know (Chu, Kamal & Kim, 2013). On the other hand, availing a lot of information would communicate desperation from the part of the marketers eliciting doubts from the



consumers' who feel; if the products were worth it there is no need for that much advertising. Emphasis should be put on the kind of information released to the consumers and the drawbacks it may evoke.

## **6. Recommendations and conclusion**

This paper has presented several issues regarding the attitudes consumers may have towards online advertisements, using theories and predictors to solidify the arguments. Marketers have the mandate to take into consideration a number of aspects to foster positive attitudes from consumers which translates to achievement of the company's goals (Clow, 2004). Firstly, laser focus should be put on predictors of consumer attitudes namely; usability, trust and information and marketers encouraged to hack into market trends to uncover consumer needs, thus aligning their products in that direction. Secondly, having looked at the online advertisement techniques and their evolution, company marketers should merge those that are working for each as well as address the weaknesses (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013).

The government should take up the initiative and develop policies that are directed towards ad quality. This move will eliminate trolls and jokers who choose to derail the online marketing industry, especially social media giving genuine companies a major challenge in creating trust with customers. Importantly, the Native advertising strategy should be embraced by companies, as it has amassed trust amongst consumers. And finally, social media platforms should come up with more subtle methods of advertisement that do not interfere with consumers browsing.

In conclusion having weighed all the arguments presented in this paper, it is evident that inasmuch as online brand marketing is being used, consumer attitudes depend on a number of factors. For companies to make the most out of online advertising, a holistic approach, which takes into account consumers' needs is necessary.



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