**CMS 216 MARKETING FOUNDATION FOR ADVERTISING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS**

**MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**

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**MARKETING STRATEGY**

You cannot achieve success in any area of your life without a strategy. The same is true of marketing. A company with a marketing strategy might have a goal of capturing 70 percent of a given market share and have definite plans on how to accomplish that goal. A company without a solid marketing strategy might intend to expand sales by growing several market sectors, but not really have a specific focus or a plan to achieve its goals.

Coca-Cola is a great example of a brand using international marketing strategy efforts. They use sponsorship to place their brand at the centre of the biggest sports events in the world. In this way, they can use their power as a brand to encourage participation in sports at all levels while also promoting the consumption of their product in a responsible and moderate way.

Though a large corporation, Coca-Cola focuses on small community programs and invests a lot of time and money in small-scale charity efforts. For example, in Egypt, Coca-Cola has built 650 clean water installations in the rural village of Beni Suef and sponsors Ramadan meals for children across the Middle East. Not to mention, the brand sticks with selling an emotion that can't get lost in translation: happiness.

In Nigeria, Coca-Cola is the Official Soft Drink and Co-Sponsor of Nigeria National Teams. Also, the Coca-Cola Foundation, through the New World Program (NWP), gave a grant worth $100,000 to the Mental and Environmental Development Initiative for Children (MEDIC) towards implementing a recycling scheme for women and youth empowerment (RESWAYE) in January 2020.

The marketing strategy informs the marketing plan, which is a document that details the specific types of marketing activities a company conducts and contains timetables for rolling out various marketing initiatives. Marketing strategies should ideally have longer life spans than individual marketing plans because they contain value propositions and other key elements of a company’s brand, which generally hold consistent over the long haul.

**Marketing strategy** is a long-term, forward-looking approach and an overall game plan of any organization or any business with the fundamental goal of achieving a sustainable competitive advantage by understanding the needs and want of customers.

The marketing strategy should be a company's initial focus. It should consider the opportunities and threats in each potential market, along with the company's own strengths and weaknesses. This is called a **SWOT** analysis, a marketing tool used to understand these elements. Once the target market, product and specific goals have been chosen, the rest of the marketing mix can be fleshed out around the central target of the marketing strategy. Marketing strategy should be heavily based on solid marketing research, not on assumptions.

Marketing is not a standalone activity. A good marketing strategy will include all elements of the marketing mix as part of its tactical plan. The original marketing mix, or 4 Ps, as originally proposed by marketer and academic Jerome .E. McCarthy in 1960, provides a framework for marketing decision-making. McCarthy's marketing mix has since become one of the most enduring and widely accepted frameworks in marketing either that be three, five or ten years. The marketing mix is a key strategic tool used in developing a marketing strategy. It includes four elements: product, distribution, price and promotion.

**Product**: The goods and/or services offered by a company to its customers.

**Price**: The amount of money paid by customers to purchase the product.

**Place (or distribution)**: The activities that make the product available to consumers.

**Promotion**: The activities that communicate the product’s features and benefits and persuade customers to purchase the product.

**Each of the four Ps has its own tools to contribute to the marketing mix:**

**Product**: variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, services

**Price**: list price, discounts, allowance, payment period, credit terms

**Place**: channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transportation, logistics

**Promotion**: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations.

**Difference between strategic marketing and a marketing strategy**

Although people sometimes use these two terms interchangeably, they are in fact very different and mean different things. To understand this better, here are some of the differences between strategic marketing and a marketing strategy.

Strategic marketing is a method through which an organization differentiates itself from its competition by focusing on its strengths to provide better service and value to its customers while marketing strategy is an organization’s plan to target people and convert them into consumers of the organization’s products and services.

Strategic marketing is related to the management level as it involves determining budgets, allocation of resources and improving product quality while, marketing strategy does not involve the higher management, as it only includes creating marketing strategies for a particular product or service. The strategies could consist of a promotional plan, distribution and price of the product.

Strategic marketing analyses various factors such as organization performance, competition environment, competitors and demographic behavior of customers in order to achieve organizational goals while, A marketing strategy focuses on the products and services of an organization and their positioning in relation to attracting customers.

**INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION**

Modern marketing calls for more than just developing a good product, pricing it attractively and making it available to target customers. Companies must also communicate with current and prospective customers, and what they communicate should not be left to chance. Just as good communication is important in building and maintaining any kind of relationship, it is a critical element in a company’s efforts to build customer relationships.

The **American Marketing Association defines IMC** as “a planning process designed to assure that all brand contacts received by a customer or prospect for a product, service, or organization are relevant to that person and consistent over time.”

Two major factors are changing the face of today’s marketing communications. First, as mass markets have fragmented, marketers are shifting away from mass marketing. More and more, they are developing focused marketing programs designed to build closer relationships with customers in more narrowly defined micro-markets. Second, vast improvements in information technology are speeding the movement towards segmented marketing. Today’s information technology helps marketers to keep closer track of customer needs – more information is available about customers at the individual and household levels than ever before. New technologies also provide new communications avenues for reaching smaller customer segments with more tailored messages.

The shift from mass marketing to segmented marketing has had a dramatic impact on marketing communications. Just as mass marketing gave rise to a new generation of mass media communications, so the shift towards one-to-one marketing is spawning a new generation of more specialized and highly targeted communications efforts.

The shift from mass marketing to targeted marketing, and the corresponding use of a richer mixture of communication channels and promotion tools, poses a problem for marketers. Customers do not distinguish between message sources the way marketers do. In the consumer’s mind, advertising messages from different media such as television, magazines or online sources blur into one. Messages delivered via different promotional approaches all become part of a single overall message about the company. Conflicting messages from these different sources can result in confused company images and brand positions. All too often, companies fail to integrate their various communications channels. The result is a hodgepodge of communications to consumers. Mass-media advertisements say one thing, a price promotion sends a different signal, a product label creates still another message, company sales literature says something altogether different, and the company’s website seems out of sync with everything else. The problem is that these communications often come from different company sources. Advertising messages are planned and implemented by the advertising department or advertising agency. Personal selling communications are developed by sales management. Other functional specialists are responsible for public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, online sites and other forms of marketing communication.

When these companies carefully integrate and coordinate their many communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organization and its products. It builds a strong brand identity in the marketplace by tying together and reinforcing all the company’s messages, positioning and images, and identity, coordinating these across all its marketing communications venues. It means that your PR materials say the same thing as your direct mail campaign, and your advertising has the same ‘look and feel’ as your website.

IMC calls for recognizing all contact points where the customer may encounter the company, its products and its brands. Each brand contact will deliver a message, whether good, bad or indifferent. The company works out the roles that the various promotional tools will play and the extent to which each will be used to deliver a consistent and positive message at all contact points. It carefully coordinates the promotional activities and the timing of when major campaigns take place.

 It keeps track of its promotional expenditures by product, promotional tool, product life-cycle stage and observed effect in order to improve future use of the promotion-mix tools. Finally, to implement integrated marketing communications, some companies appoint a marketing communications director – who has overall responsibility for the company’s communications efforts. Essentially, in order for the firm’s external communications to be integrated effectively, it must first integrate its internal communications activities.

Integrated marketing communications produce better communications consistency and greater sales impact. They place the responsibility in someone’s hands where none existed before to unify the company’s image as it is shaped by thousands of company activities. They lead to a total marketing communication strategy aimed at showing how the company and its products can help customers solve their problems.

**Various components of Integrated Marketing Communication:**

**The Foundation** - As the name suggests, foundation stage involves detailed analysis of both the product as well as target market. It is essential for marketers to understand the brand, its offerings and end-users. You need to know the needs, attitudes and expectations of the target customers. Keep a close watch on competitor’s activities.

**The Corporate Culture** - The features of products and services ought to be in line with the work culture of the organization. Every organization has a vision and it’s important for the marketers to keep in mind the same before designing products and services. For example, Organization A‘s vision is to promote green and clean world. Naturally its products need to be eco friendly and biodegradable, in lines with the vision of the organization.

**Brand Focus** - Brand Focus represents the corporate identity of the brand.

**Consumer Experience** - Marketers need to focus on consumer experience which refers to what the customers feel about the product. A consumer is likely to pick up a product which has good packaging and looks attractive. Products need to meet and exceed customer expectations.

**Communication Tools** - Communication tools include various modes of promoting a particular brand such as advertising, direct selling, promoting through social media such as facebook, twitter, and so on.

**Promotional Tools** - Brands are promoted through various promotional tools such as trade promotions, personal selling and so on. Organizations need to strengthen their relationship with customers and external clients.

**Integration Tools** - Organizations need to keep a regular track on customer feedbacks and reviews. You need to have specific software like customer relationship management (CRM) which helps in measuring the effectiveness of various integrated marketing communications tools.

Integrated marketing communication enables all aspects of marketing mix to work together in harmony to promote a particular product or service effectively among end-users.

**THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF CORONAVIRUS ON THE ELEMENTS OF THE MARKETING MIX OF PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC**

PZ Cussons was formed in 1975, when Paterson Zochonis took over Cussons Group Ltd. from the Cussons family, who founded Cussons in 1938. The company expanded its operations into what is now Nigeria before the end of the 19th century. PZ Cussons Group has a marketing presence in Europe, Africa and Asia.

Nigeria is PZ Cussons’ largest and most diverse single market, operating in Personal Care, Home Care, Food & Nutrition and Electricals. They have been operating in Nigeria for 120 years and today employ over 3500 people working across their extensive network. PZ Cussons operates a joint venture electrical superstore in Lagos, Nigeria. To increase revenues, it expanded its product line to include Thermocool appliances. Within the group's structure, PZ industrial division concentrated on toiletries, soaps and detergents manufacturing while Thermocool focused on refrigerators.

The COVID-19 outbreak which has been spreading rapidly has come with a devastating global impact. This corona virus pandemic has become a global threat, increasing from197,590 infections and 7,954 deaths in March 17, 2020 to 4,063,525 infections and 282,244 deaths as at May 11,2020- barely two months.

The bid to contain the spread of the corona virus disease has led to lockdowns and travil restrictions across countries has affected the various elements of the marketing mix of PZ Cussons Nigeria plc.

**PRODUCT**

The products manufactured by PZ Cussons Nigeria PLC include: Personal Care – Imperial Leather, Carex, Cussons Baby, Premier, Robb, Venus, Joy,Vaseline. Home Care – Zip, Morning Fresh, Canoe. Electricals – Haier Thermocool, TEC. Food & Nutrition – Olympic, Nunu, Coast, Mamador and Devon King’s.

Since the lockdown order was passed, the productions of these goods have been put on hold to avoid breaking laws, ensure social distancing and to reduce the spread. All warehouses and offices owned by the organization have been closed till the general situation of the country improves. Also with the lockdown order employees are not able to go to work and therefore have to work from home. For example, a worker staying in Ogun state cannot make it to Lagos because it puts his life and that of those round him in danger and he will not be let into Lagos because of the interstate travel ban.

Nothing can be produced without manual labor but to reduce costs, the organization might have to reduce its number of employees. The travel restrictions imposed also make it impossible for these manufacturers to get raw materials needed for production. All hands are tied and the economic situation of the company will begin to deteriorate with time. PZ Cussons said that the impact of Covid-19 continues to be significant but that it varies depending on business unit and market.

**PRICE**

Prices of goods and services are going up because of the high cost of production and the rise in dollar. For example, a bag of rice that used to sell for N18,000 now sells for N25,000, Honeywell Semolina (10kg) that used to sell for N2,800 now sells for N3,100. Even a loaf of bread that used to sell for N350 now sells for N400.

These prices may never go back down with the current state of the country’s economy. PZ will eventually have to increase the price of the goods to make profit and make for losses made during the lockdown. This will provide the organization with funds to pay salaries of employees, to service equipments whenever necessary and to get raw materials when the lockdown is eased.

**PLACE/DISTRIBUTION**

The Company operates 26 distribution depots across Nigeria, namely Aba, Ilorin, Minna, Isolo and Onitsha depots, among others. Consumers want what they need when they need it; not earlier and not later. Being able to provide these items when needed is critical to maintaining sales and building brand loyalty.

Just-in-time supply maximizes demand but with the present situation of the country, the lockdown order and ban on interstate travel, goods cannot be properly distributed on time. All the depots are closed down and the goods available for distribution are limited because there is no production.

**PROMOTION**

Advertising messages are planned and implemented by the advertising department or advertising agency. Personal selling communications are developed by sales management. Other functional specialists are responsible for public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, online sites and other forms of marketing communication.

During these times, personal selling is definitely out of the picture. We are all aware that social distancing is very important and necessary to avoid further spread of the corona virus and it is difficult to practice personal selling while also social distancing. The company will have to rely on direct marketing, online sites and television advertising as most people are home and without access to other people or billboards.

**Conclusion**

Everybody and every business are affected by the corona virus. This has been explained in details above using PZ Cussons Nigeria plc as a case study. Production is put on pause, prices flare up, distribution is disrupted and different promotional tools have to be used to reach potential consumers, sponsors and customers. The entire marketing mix is affected and they must be changed to fit the current economic situation of the country.

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