Role of public relations in the re establishment

Life, Relationships

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to the Almighty God for His infinite mercies throughout this programme. I also dedicate this work to my lovely parents Chief and Chief (Mrs.) A. O. Awobamise who have always been there for me financially and morally, may the good Lord continually reward you endlessly for your ceaseless efforts. God Bless you all. iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Lanre Adebanwo you are appreciated. My very lovely friend; Feyikemi Omotosho, I thank you for the support and encouragement you gave me during this study year. May God continue to reward you according to your heart desires. Thank you all for making this study a success, may God continue to reward you all. AMEN. iv

ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, it is no longer surprising to hear that a company that everyone thought was doing well is going out of the market, the same applies for products. The prevailing financial crisis in Nigeria and the world over has not helped issues.

Companies are folding up by the day. The case of VITA FOAM is a very unique situation because the company was fast failing and rapidly losing market share, and in a bid to curb this downward trend did some public relations and advert campaigns that re-established them as market leaders. Advertising can therefore be defined as the non-personalcommunicationfrom products, services, or ideas that is paid for by an identified sponsor for the purpose of influencing an audience. Public Relations on the other hand has been defined as the art and socialsciencef analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organizations' leaders as well as implementing a planned program of action which serves both the publics and the organization interest. Vitafoam Nigeria Plc is presently Nigeria's leading manufacturer of flexible, reconstituted and rigid foam products. It has the largest foam manufacturing and distribution network which facilitates just-in-time delivery of its products throughout Nigeria. Incorporated on 4th August, 1962 and listed on the floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange in 1978.

Vitafoam's successful brands remain household names in the country.

INTRODUCTION

In carrying out this research, it is pertinent that a detailed definition of PR and Advertising is attempted. This is to enable us have a broader view of the above topic.

Also a brief description of what it means for a company/product to be failing is relevant to our study. Advertising can therefore be defined as the non-personal communication from products, services, or ideas that is paid for by an identified sponsor for the purpose of influencing an audience. (Bruce G. Vanden Berge and Helen Katz, 1999). Public Relations on the other hand has been defined as the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organizations' leaders as well as implementing a planned program of action which serves both the publics and the organization interest.

This definition was adopted in 1978 at the first global conference of National Public Relations Association and is known as TheMexicanStatement. It should be understood that there has been a history of companies that folded up and never found their way back into the market, two examples are, the Planta margarine and Miller brewing company. So the case of VITA FOAM is 1 a very unique situation because the company was fast failing and rapidly losing market share, and in a bid to curb this downward trend did some campaigns that re-established them as market leaders.

Hence my reason for researching on this unique situation and trying to see how PR and advertising helped in the rebound of this product. One of the reasons for this can be traced to the fact that most companies when they become big, they tend to believe that success automatically breeds more

success which often results in " unfocusing" of a company's effort. In relating these professions i. e. Advertising and Public Relations, to the above topic (the use of public relations and advertising as a tool for the rebranding and re-establishing of failing products in Nigeria).

It is pertinent to give a brief look at the roles and functions advertising and Public relations is supposed to play generally and then relate it to the product: VITAFOAM.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It is my opinion that once a company/product fails and it is the will of management to see a rebound for the product or company, then the company should focus on how it would make a comeback and remain relevant even after itsfailurerather than looking at what made the company fail. Because it is only by looking at the future, we get a better understanding of the past.

It is based on this reasoning that I have decided to use the, EXCELLENCE THEORY BY 2 L. A GRUNIG, Lavidge & Steiners hierarchy of effects theory, and DAGMAR THEORY. The " Excellence Theory," originally proposed in 1992 (J. E. Grunig et al. , 1992), was grounded upon an " extensive literature" review and evaluation, examining theoretical positions from variousacademicdisciplines and ontologies, including: marketing, psychology, communication, and feminist studies (J. E. Grunig, 1991). The project's purpose was to develop a new pproach to public relations, detailing to public relations practitioners what organizations must have (both in expectations and characteristics) in order to be excellent and how to

communicate those same concepts. The resultant characteristics of excellent public relations programs look at all levels of organization: program, departmental, organizational, and societal, along with the desired effects of excellent public relations practice. These characteristics not only present the " Excellence Theory" as a normative ideology, but also as an emancipatory system that strives for egalitarian opportunities for all publics.

The characteristics and effects of excellent public relations, as presented by L. A. Grunig et al. (2002, p. 9), offer an opportunity for the critical inquiry of the dominantcoalitionwithin either an anonymous public relations organization or an organization with a public relations component. 3 Lavidge and Steiner's Hierarchy-of-effects model is created to show the process, or steps, that an advertiser assumes that customers pass through in the actual purchase process (Barry & Howard, 1990). The model is based on seven steps.

Lavidge and Steiner (1961) write that the steps have to be completed in a linear way, but a potential purchaser sometimes may move up several steps simultaneously. (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961) which is supported by Munoz (2002) who writes that normally ultimate customers do not switch directly from being interested to become convinced buyers. Lavidge and Steiner identify the seven steps in the following order: 1. Close to purchasing, but still a long way from the cash register, are those who are merely aware of its existence. 2. Up a step are prospects who know what the product has to offer. 3.

Still closer to purchasing are those who have favourable attitudes toward the product those who like the product. 4. Those whose favourable attitudes

have developed to the point of preference over all other possibilities are up still another step. 5. Even closer to purchasing are customers who couple preference with a desire to buy and the conviction that the purchase would be wise. 4 6. Finally, of course, is the step which translates this attitude into actual purchase. (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961, p. 59) DAGMAR was created by Russell Colley when he prepared a report for the Association of National Advertisers.

This report was entitled Defining AdvertisingGoalsfor Measured Advertising Results, shortened down to DAGMAR, and thereof the name, (Belch & Belch, 1995) and was later in 1969 published as a book with the same title (Mackay, 2005). DAGMAR focuses on the levels of understanding that a customer must have for the organisation and on how to measure the results of an advertising campaign (Belch & Belch, 1995). The main conclusions on the DAGMAR theory were expressed in the following quotation: All commercial communications that weigh on the ultimate objective of a sale must carry a prospect through four levels of understanding. . The prospect must first be aware of the existence of a brand or organisation 2. He must have a comprehension of what the product is and what it will do for him 3. He must arrive at a mental suspicion or conviction to buy the product 4. Finally he must stir himself to action. (Mackay, 2005).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Nigeria, it is no longer surprising to hear that a company that everyone thought was doing well is going out of the market, the same applies for products. In fact the major reasons why people attempt new business ides is the fear of failure.

The prevailing financial crisis in Nigeria and the world over has not helped issues. Companies are folding up by the day. In a CNN broadcast, it was stated that Marks and Spencers have presently closed over half of their retail outlets in UK. It is common to see a company's sales begin to dwindle and clientele drop, this is okay because every company, product or service as a life circle and as such a decline period. However what is not common is seeing companies making a comeback after experiencing dwindling sales and near-extinction, where naturally Integrated Marketing communications which includes both dvertising and public relations should come save the day. Where Public Relations and Advertising comes in, how they help solve the crisis and put a failing product back into the market is what this research is trying to find out.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

This research is significant because this is the first time in Nigeria someone has tried to empirically discover why products fail in relation to advertising and public relations. It is a unique project because it is rare in Nigeria to find acase studysuch as used in this research which experienced decline but is presently doing strong in the market.

STUDY UTILITY

The study would help professionals in the field of public relations and advertising know and understand what makes a product or company fail and what other companies such as Ovaltine have done to make a comeback into the Nigerian market. Also students of mass communication and particularly students and scholars of advertising and public relations would benefit as it

would help them understand the roles advertising and public relations is supposed to play in re-establishing a failing product into the market.

SCOPE OF STUDY

This research shall focus on retailers of Vitafoam in Ikeja, Agege and Mushin.

The researcher shall try tointerviewfive (5) Vitafoam retail shops in each of the three local government areas the research hopes to cover. 7 I shall also be interviewing the advertising agency (TIE COMMUNICATIONS LTD) particularly the account officer in charge of the Vitafoam account would also be interviewed. Questionnaires would be distributed to customers in shops where Vitafoam products and other competing products are sold, this would enable me know how often people choose to buy Vitafoam products and how advertisements/public relations have helped make this decision. 1. RESEARCH QUESTIONS The research findings would try to answer the following questions; 1. What caused the decrease in sales of Vitafoam products? 2. How did public relations and advertising help restore Vitafoam into the market? 3. How do we identify a failing product? 4. What strategies do public relations experts employ in re-establishing Vitafoam in the market? 5. What advertising strategies were employed in re-establishing Vita foam in the market?

AIMS AND OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to determine the following: 1. What made Vitafoam fail 8 2.

The role public relations and advertising plays in the rebound of Vitafoam. 3. The factors in play when Vitafoam failed. 4. The strategies used in re-establishing Vitafoam into the market

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Putting into consideration the terminologies used in this research it would be pertinent to know what these terminologies literarily mean. ? PUBLIC RELATIONS: is defined as the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counselling organizations' leaders as well as implementing a planned program of action which serves both the publics and the organization interest. Advertising: It is a collective term for public announcements designed to promote the sale of specific commodities or services. Advertising is a form of mass selling, employed when the use of direct, person-to-person selling is impractical, impossible, or simply inefficient. It is to be distinguished from other activities intended to persuade the public, such as propaganda, publicity, and public relations. Re-branding: identification of product with manufacturer: the use of advertising, distinctive design, and other means to make consumers associate a specific product that have previously lost market share and hoping for a rebound, with a specific manufacturer. 9 ? Failing products: A decline in strength or effectiveness. ? Re-establishing: bring back into original existence, use, function, or position; " restore a product back into the market" ? Customer: The term customer will in this study be used to describe one or more individuals that use and buy the organisations products.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION

The researcher for the purpose of clarity would give a detailed definition of basic terminologies that would be used in this research. In the early 1920s, Edward L. Bernays, often said to be the architect of public relations as it is

practiced today, defined public relations in this manner: Public relations is the management function which tabulates public attitudes, defines the policies, procedures and interest of an organization followed by executing a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

Bernays identifies two aspects underlying the practice of public relations. The first is influencing the decision making process in a way that reconciles a client's or employer's objectives to accord with public expectations and serve the public interest; second, it employs communications strategies and tactics to motivate audiences to a specific course of action. In short: influence behaviour and effectively communicate. 10 Advertising on the other hand, is the process of persuading potential customers to buy products or promote its services.

The process of advertising involves a variety of strategies and media. Advertisements may appear in many forms, including newspaper and magazine ads, radio and television commercials, direct mail campaigns, and various other forms. With the emergence of brand recognition as a key factor in marketing and advertising, companies have entered into multi-billion dollar contracts with advertising firms to promote their products and services. These efforts have led to products becoming integral aspects of popularculture(Berge B. G And Katz H. 1999).

Rebranding can be described as the total change in the logo, name, packaging or even the introduction of a totally new product for the purpose of re-establishing relevance in the market place.

THE HISTORY OF ADVERTISING

The Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia (2002) explains that the origins of advertising lie thousands of years in the past. One of the first known methods of advertising was the outdoor display, usually an eye-catching sign painted on the wall of a building. Archaeologists have uncovered many such signs, notably in the ruins of ancient Rome and Pompeii.

An outdooradvertisementexcavated in Rome offers property for rent, and one found painted on a wall in Pompeii calls the attention of travellers to tavern situated in another town. In medieval times word-of-mouth praise of products gave rise to a simple but effective form of advertising, the use of so-called town criers. The criers were 11 citizens who read public notices aloud and were also employed by merchants to shout the praises of their wares. Although graphic forms of advertising appeared early in history astechnologyadvanced. Printed advertising made little headway until the invention of the printing press. The trademark, a wo-or three-dimensional design symbolizing a company or industry, dates from about the 16th century, when trades people and guild members posted characteristic symbols outside their shops. Among the best-known trademarks surviving from early modern times are the stripped pole of the barber and the three-ball sign of the pawnbroker. In terms of both volume and technique, advertising made its greatest early advances in the United States. In the early stages of American advertising nationwide promotion was impractical because the nation itself was underdeveloped and lacked transcontinental transport, distribution, and communications systems.

Eventually, however, certain types of manufacturers conceived the idea of bypassing wholesalers and retailers and reaching the consumer through direct advertising, mainly by means of catalogues. The pioneers in this field were seed companies and book and pamphlet publishers. Mail-order houses appeared on the scene as early as the 1870s. To the flyer advertising, although some of the biggest houses also sell through retail outlets. Nowadays, advances in advertising are international. 12 Patent-medicine companies loomed large in British newspaper and magazine advertising from scarce outside the populated areas.

The patent-medicine bottlers made a gross profit of between 80 and 90 per cent and could therefore well afford to spendmoneypublicizing their remedies. Railway and steamship lines were also among the early users of advertising in the United States, not only to praise the luxury and comfort of their modes of travel but also to publish their schedule and rates. Late in the 19th century many firms began to market packaged goods under brand names. This development initiated a new era in the history of advertising.

Previously, such everyday household products as sugar, soap, rice, molasses, butter, milk, lard, beans, confectionery, candles, pickles and a host of others had been sold in neighbourhood shops from bulk packages. As a result, consumers had seldom been aware of, or influenced by, brand names. In Britain and in the United States, the soap-makers were early advertisers of packaged and branded products. The first " household name" soap brands, which date from about 1880, include Ivory, Pears', and Colgate. Soon afterwards such brands as Royal Baking Powder, Quaker Oats, and Waterman's Pens were nationally advertised.

Shortly after the turn of the 20th century Americans began to be aware of such brand names as Wrigley and Coca-Cola. 13 Other countries of the world, through advertising are also aware of certain brands. After World War 1, advertising developed into a business so big that it became almost a trademark of United States itself in the eyes of the world. This expansion was stimulated by many technological improvements, and the expanding American industry inspired innovations and improved techniques that benefited other facets of business in the nation and the world at large.

The invention of electricity led to the illuminated outdoor posters; photoengraving and other modern printing inventions helped both the editorial and advertising departments of printed journals. Public-relations specialists used advertising increasingly as an important means of communication. Advertising is vast advancing worldwide with the aid of technology, and advertisers are changing their tactics or switching such to suit the technologies available and making maximum use of such technologies to advertise. A good example is the proliferation of the Internet.

Other on-line computer networks has also compensated by opening a whole new medium for advertising. Advertising development in Nigeria could be traced to about 1928 with the birth of West African Publicity Limited. An off shoot of UAC, the company 14 was set up to cater for the marketing activities of the colonial masters in both Nigeria and West Africa. This company was later to transform to a fully fledged advertising firm in 1929 known as Lintas with two other subsidiaries newly Afromedia, the outdoor medium and Pearl/Dean, the cinema arm.

With the setting up of the companies then headed by expatriates, the companies were to enjoy a monopoly for a long time to come it was not until 1950's when other advertising agencies started to emerge on the scene. Ogilvy, Benson and Martha (OBM) and Grant were later to join the fray to form the big three in the i n d u s t r y . The medium of advertising was in its infancy in those days Federal Government owned National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) where he only television stations that operated in the four regions of East, West, North and later Midwest.

These regions later set up their private stations pioneered by the West, at Ibadan, prior to independence. In 1960 and 1962 respectively, Enugu and Kaduna followed suit. And with the creation of more regions by the General Yakubu Gowon (rtd) administration and creation of more states by both Alhaji Shehu Shagari and Ibrahim Babangida regimes, more state government-owned television and radio stations were established. Daily Times, Express, Tribune, New Nigeria and Sketch were among the fore-runners in newspaper publishing. Some state governments also published 15 ewspapers that addressed their local audience. Two major magazines- Drum and Spear from Daily Times stable were also at the time published. Between the early 1960's and 1970, there was no spectacular development in the industry. But the promulgation of Nigeria Enterprises as promotion Decree of 1972 popularly known as Indigenization policy ushered in a new phase in the industry. The policy transformed key positions in corporate organisations to indigenes. Mr Silvester, Muoemeka was by the dictates of the policy to emerge the first indigenous chief executive of Lintas.

Lintas further empowered more Nigerians to take up the business of advertising some of whom had to leave broadcasting to embrace the new thinking. By the later 1970's however, two ambitious agencies, Rosabel Advertising and Insight Communication, sprang up. The coming of the two agencies which till today are still doing very well, no doubt, was a watershed in the industry of advertising in Nigeria as the agencies brought new ideas into the industry while taking creativity to a higher. Before the turn of the decade, 23 agencies had been formed.

With the steady growth in the number of practitioners and agencies arose the need for associations to be formed to advance their common interests and a regulatory body to that would regulate and standardize advertising practice. A 16 meeting of the agencies held at Ebute Metta, Lagos in 1971 was to metamorphose into Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN) with the objective of protecting practitioners against unfavourable business. The association was later renamed Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria.

As the industry continued to grow in volume of business and complexity, more and more people were attracted to the industry. The need to establish an institution to regulate advertising practice became apparent. This gave rise to the establishment of Advertising Parishioners Council of Nigeria (APCON) by Decree 55 of 1988, later renamed Act 55 of 1988 by the civilian administration on November 1989, the first meeting of the association held somewhere in Ebute-meta, Lagos finally culminated to the birth of APCON. APCON started operation in 1990 with the employment of the pioneer registrar in the person of Dr Charles Okigbo.

The era of economic restructuring and liberalization opened up the Nigerian business to global economy. Foreign investments started flowing into the economy the expatriates who once left the shores of the land due to the indigenization policy gradually returned. And with them, the boom in economy. Aside, privatization of mass communication medium in the 1990's also witnessed the setting up of private owned media houses which are platforms for advertisement placements. " But in the 1990's the sector came alive. Not only that alarming and ambitions agencies such as Prima Garnet, Sotu and Caesers sprang up, the sector began to 17 xpand beyond advertising as full services public relation firms such as the Quadrant JSP and Quest were established. Also the era witnessed the mad rush of foreign affiliations. While some agencies sought this affiliation to help boost their human capital, others just joined the bandwagon just to feel among. " As the business expanded, related services providers joined the fray to cash in on the boom. Not long after they formed themselves into association to also further heir cause and protect their interest. Media Independent Practitioners Association of Nigeria (ADVAN), outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN) emerged.

Not long the industry became an all corners affairs. Competition became very stiff and practitioners started adopting unwholesome means to undercut one another. Industry debt became a major issue to the extent that it attracted the attention of past federal government who encouraged the practitioners to find a way of resolving the perennial problem. Just as competition continued to get stiff, agencies did not rest on their oars as they embarked on training of their staff that will be able to meet the challenge of

modern day advertising. As creativity took centre stage, the industry witnessed a lot of innovation and creative ideas.

The foreigners who started coming back brought with them standard and professional which changed the advertising landscape. Restructuring, training and brand building and creativity have taken centre stage. 18 Today, Nigerian advertising industry is making efforts to ensure that they measured up to global industry practice. Affiliations also avails them of technical know-how in the areas of creativity and training. From deploying foreign adverts, the industry has grown to shooting their adverts locally and injecting a lot of local content in their campaigns.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research would critically consider three different theories that are relevant to the research topic. The theories are as follows: Excellence theory by J. E. Grunig DAGMAR theory by Mackay Lavidge & Steiners Hierarchy-of-effects theory EXCELLENCE THEORY The " Excellence Theory" (J. E. Grunig et al. , 2002) was initially developed, and is continually being tested, in order to demonstrate what makes for public relations practices that are both efficient and ethical for all parties involved. Public relations, as defined by J.

E, Grunig (1992), is " the management of communication between the organization and the publics that it interacts with". Through the continued work of the Excellence Project, the " Excellence Theory" demonstrates how excellent public relations is able to interact and 19 work with both internal and external publics, recognizing that publics are not merely passive audiences accepting messages in a hegemonic structure, 1 but that each public that comes into contact with the message is viable and enfranchised

with agency. The " publics" in public relations exist within and outside the organization.

Each public, through the interaction with the public relations professional, allows for a variety of perspectives and insights toward a single goal or a collection of goals. If these groups are not allowed the choice to have their respective voices heard and recognized as active and important, decisions are made by the dominant coalition (L. A. Grunig et al. , 2002) without all of the mitigating factors and facts placed in front of them, resulting in the once dominant organization losing economic, political, and social capital within and among the publics served.

It is this critical perspective to public relations, respecting publics as ethical and moral beings, that L. A. Grunig et al. (2002) aligned with when they considered the most important question for ethical public relations: " How can one balance the interests of society, of the public relations profession, and of the individual professional" (p. 556). The " Excellence Theory," originally proposed in 1992 (J. E. Grunig et al. , 1992), was grounded upon an " extensive literature" review and evaluation, examining theoretical positions from various academic disciplines and ontologies, including: marketing, psychology, communication, and feminist 20 tudies (J. E. Grunig, 1991). The project's purpose was to develop a new approach to public relations, detailing to public relations practitioners what organizations must have (both in expectations and characteristics) in order to be excellent and how to communicate those same concepts. The resultant characteristics of excellent public relations programs look at all levels of organization:

program, departmental, organizational, and societal, along with the desired effects of excellent public relations practice.

These characteristics not only present the " Excellence Theory" as a normative ideology, but also as an emancipatory system that strives for egalitarian opportunities for all publics. The characteristics and effects of excellent public relations, as presented by L. A. Grunig et al. (2002, p. 9), offer an opportunity for the critical inquiry of the dominant coalition within either an antonymous public relations organization or an organization with a public relations component.

This new possibility for the theory and its pragmatic capabilities position the " Excellence Theory" as a critical paradigm applicable to the current calls for critical research within public relations. DAGMAR Russell Colley created DAGMAR when he prepared a report for the Association of National Advertisers. This report was entitled Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results, shortened down to 21 DAGMAR, and thereof the name, (Belch & Belch, 1995) and was later in 1969 published as a book with the same title (Mackay, 2005).

DAGMAR was created to encourage measurable objectives for each stage of the communication (Smith & Taylor, 2002) and does not deal purely with the message (Mackay 2005). DAGMAR focuses on the levels of understanding that a customer must have for the organisation and on how to measure the results of an advertising campaign (Belch & Belch, 1995). The main conclusions on the DAGMAR theory were expressed in the following quotation: All commercial communications that weigh on the ultimate objective of a sale must carry a prospect through four levels of

understanding. . The prospect must first be aware of the existence of a brand or organisation 2. He must have a comprehension of what the product is and what it will do for him 3. 4. He must arrive at a mental suspicion or conviction to buy the product Finally he must stir himself to action. (Mackay, 2005, p. 25-26) 22 The communication has to be specific and measurable, and is therefore based on a hierarchical model containing the four stages set out above in the quotation (Mackay, 2005).

The DAGMAR approach has had a huge influence on the how to set objectives in the advertising planning process and many planners use this model as their base. However, just as the other approaches within advertising, DAGMAR has been met with critique. One of the major criticisms towards DAGMAR is on its reliance on the hierarchy-of-effects theory, just as with AIDA. Customers do not always pass through the stages in a linear way. Another criticism made towards the DAGMAR approach is that it focuses too much on strategies.

Many creative people within advertising are looking for the great unique idea that can result in a successful campaign and feels that the DAGMAR approach is too concerned with quantitative measurements on the campaign (Belch & Belch, 1995).

LAVIDGE & STEINERS HIERARCHY-OF-EFFECTS MODEL
This model was published during the same period as DAGMAR. The model was named the hierarchy-of-effects model which is the same name as some authors used on the foundation theory, and will therefore go under the name, Lavidge & Steiners Hierarchy-of-effects model in this study. 23

According to this model customers do not switch from being completely uninterested to become convinced to buy the product in one step. Lavidge and Steiners hierarchy-of-effects model is created to show the process, or steps, that an advertiser assumes that customers pass through in the actual purchase process (Barry & Howard, 1990). The model is based on seven steps, which as with the other models must be completed in a linear way. The big difference between this model and the others is not only the steps, but also the view on how to pass them. Lavidge and Steiner (1961) write that the steps have to be completed in a linear way, but . potential purchaser sometimes may move up several steps simultaneously. (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961, p. 60) which is supported by Munoz (2002) who writes that normally ultimate customers do not switch directly from being interested to become convinced buyers. Lavidge and Steiner identify the seven steps in the following order: 1. Close to purchasing, but still a long way from the cash register, are those who are merely aware of its existence. 2. 3. Up a step are prospects who know what the product has to offer. Still closer to purchasing are those who have favourable attitudes toward the product. 24 4.

Those whose favourable attitudes have developed to the point of preference over all other possibilities are up still another step. 5. Even closer to purchasing are customers who couple preference with a desire to buy and the conviction that the purchase would be wise. 6. Finally, of course, is the step which translates this attitude into actual purchase. (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961, p. 59) Lavidge and Steiner (1961) also wrote, in their article, that they are fully aware of the impulsive purchases that customers can make, but

they mean that for higher economical goods these steps are essential for the advertiser to include.

This model also has as a premise that advertising occurs over a period of time, and may not lead to immediate response and purchase. It is rather a series of effects that has to occur, with each step fulfilled on the way towards the next stage (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961) Behind this model is according to Belch & Belch (1998) the premises that advertising effects occur over time and advertising communication may not lead to immediate behavioural response or purchase, but rather, consumers must fulfil each step before (s)he can move to the next stage in the hierarchy. Belch and Belch 1998, p. 146). 25 As with the former models discussed, this model has also been criticised. The criticism on Lavidge & Steiners model is very similar to the one made on DAGMAR and AIDA. There is still no evidence on the fact that awareness of a products leads to purchase, and the steps are still unclear. Criticism has also been made on each individual step in the model. Critics do not think that the model explains how the customers will go from one step to another and to point out the steps without explaining them further is not seen as enough.

CRITICISM ON THE HIERARCHY OF EFFECTS THEORY
The models that are based on the hierarchy of effects theory (Mackay, 2005) can be very helpful but are not conclusive. There are several factors that these models do not take in consideration. 1. Not all buyers go through all stages, 2. The stages do not necessarily occur in hierarchical sequence, 3. Impulse purchases contract the process. (Smith & Taylor, 2002, p. 97) The hierarchy models help the advertiser to identify the stages that buyers

generally passes through, but cannot be used as obvious guidelines (Smith & Taylor, 2002). 26

As seen earlier in this chapter the criticism on the models and theories are very similar. They have all been met with the criticism that customers do not always follow a straight line of steps when purchasing a product. Not all customers pass through all the steps before buying a product, some may stop at one stage, and some may go back several steps before later on going back for the product.

REASONS WHY PRODUCTS FAILS

It would surprise one to hear that, a staggering 70-80% of all new products in the retail grocery industry fail (www. allbusiness. com). In Great Britain, the rate may be as high as 90% (www. rchives. tcm. ie/irishexaminer). Of every 3, 000 raw ideas for new products, only one makes it to the marketplace (www. faculty. msb. edu). And a whopping 46% of all resources allocated to new product development process in the U. S. are spent on products that fail (www. faculty. msb. edu). Marketing Wise Group in Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX is of the opinion that no company can do without introducing new products or extending their brand line if they want to remain afloat in a competitive market or if they do not want their products and brand image to go stale.

It is the opinion of this group that Quisp Cereal, Ipana Toothpaste or Commodore Computers failed because they failed to implement a new product development process to keep their 27 stable of brands vital or had a flawed new product development process to begin with. According to Gwinavere Johnston; founder and CEO of Johnston Wells Public Relations, if

your answer to one or more of the following questions is yes, then chances are that is the reason your product failed. 1. Did you do the right amount and kind of marketing research in the initial stages of your new product development process? . If you conducted research, did you follow the results or ignore them? 3. Was your product launched ahead of its time? 4. Was your product launched on the downward side of a waning fad or trend? 5. Did your product take on a life of its own and you got to a point your new product development process couldn't turn back? 6. Were you as a company able to execute the product to the consumer's desires? 7. Did your new product development process create a " me-too" product? Second in the marketplace is a grim position to be. How many flavoured waters does the world need? 8.

Was your company too financially conservative and too aggressive in its expectations for a quick ROI? 9. Is your new product development process as streamlined as it should be? 28 10. Is your product hitting a little before or on top of a trend, or is it a fad? According to Gwinavere Johnston when such a problem arises what is oftentimes needed is an overhaul in your new product development process, which is difficult to see from inside the organization. One may need a specialist in the new/returning product development process, someone who has been in the trenches and has had a fare share of successes and failures.

That person has the unique ability to observe your new product development process and, from their years of observing other organizations, is able to pinpoint where in your new product development process modifications need to be made. According to Glenn Moray, companies that fail or that are at the verge of collapsing, at one point in time all made the same mistake that

brought about their waterloo: failing to focus on the concerns of their publics. If publics are the groups a company relies on for success, it is dangerous to neglect them by ? ? ? ? Focusing on share price to the detriment of quality and integrity, Forming boards that are not designed for strong corporate governance, Misleading shareholders, employees and others by not sharing the full story, Emphasizing what is legal, rather than what is ethical, and/or Jeopardizing employee jobs and savings through business misconduct. 29 From the above statement by Glenn Moray, it can be deduced that customer awareness and understanding is paramount to the success of any company or product.

When a company is in distress, tell shareholders and indeed all stakeholders that full extent of the damage and what are in place to curb the problem or mitigate the effect of the problem/distress.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN MARKETING A CONSUMER BRAND

According to Glenn Moray of the Moray Evans Advertising, The strategic role of PR for consumer brands is critical to extending the impact and credibility of advertising. The questions we so often ask from a PR effort are: (1) what are you trying to achieve with your PR over the long run, and (2) how does it integrate with your marketing and communications plan?

The most obvious strategic role for PR-a role that meets a communications objective that is difficult for conventional advertising to address-is to create community affinity while at the same time complementing consumer affinity for the brand. PR is uniquely capable of building relationships with communities (geographic, demographic, social, political, special interest, etc.

) through events, sampling, causes, in-kind support, and sponsorships, to name a f e 30 w . PR delivers messages not normally addressed in conventional advertising.

For example, good news about the client's business, new services or new level of commitment to service, how well the client is measuring up within its competitive set, the client's business heritage, or the client's involvement in the community. These types of messages are critical to creating a positive sellingenvironmentfor our advertising. Equally important, it creates buzz for our client as a company. According to Leana Clark (2002), PR builds momentum into the launch of a new ad campaign. This provides exposure between media flights and increases frequency of brand exposures during the duration of the advertising period.

In the fight for brand awareness and top-of-mind consideration, there are few substitutes for pure frequency. And last, but certainly not least, we like to see PR reinforce, in the consumer's mind, those moments when a company chooses to put a stake in the ground: The launch of a new market, acquisition of another company, a new partnership, a product release, relevant differentiation, or newleadershipwith a new vision. All of which provide value to the consumer.

ROLES OF THE PR PRACTITIONER IN AN ORGANISATION 31

According to Gwinavere Johnston, there are four principal roles for a corporation's chief public relations officer. The first is to serve the corporation as a sensor of social change. He/she perceives those societal rumblings that auger good or ill for the organization. In a way, he/she is like the radar chief who gives the early warning. And after pondering the

yearnings and stirrings, he/she interprets the signals for the management team. Part of the job as corporate sensor is to keep management focused on those external problems not usually considered part of managing a large business.

He/she is the one who says " you don't care for the likes of a Ralph Nader or a Jesse Jackson, but you should never underestimate the power they wield over people and problems that can damage our business. " The second role is that of corporate conscience. I trust you -- and your colleagues in management -- will not infer that only public relations executives have a conscience -- or that public relations people are either more ethical or more moral or have a greater commitment to serving the public interest than executives with other titles.

In fact, there may be others with more of these qualities than the person with the public relations/ communications title. But the fact is that being the corporate conscience is not in the job description of other 32 executives. It is -- or should be -- in the job description of the chief public relations officer. The third role of the chief public relations/communications officer is that of communicator. The tendency -- especially in recent times, as I referred to earlier -- is to think that communications, mainly working with the media, print, electronic and digital -- is his/her only role.

Though communications is an important part of the job that is hardly the case. The global corporation has two distinct audiences; one external, the other internal. Communications with both audiences move in two directions: what the corporation says to its external stakeholders and what it says to its employees, distribution and supply chains, and shareowners. Listening is as

important a part of the job as speaking -- and the chief public relations officer should be equally adept at both. For both audiences, the " why" and " how" of an action or policy is invariably as important, if not more so, than the " what" and the " when. The goal of communications is more than to tell or inform; its primary purpose is to bring about understanding. No matter how effective the dissemination of information about a corporation, it will not succeed unless it truthfully reflects the corporation's behaviour. Above all, the corporation must always deliver on its promises, whether guaranteeing the reliability of a product or achieving earnings goals. In the words of the rapper, if you're gonna talk the talk, you gotta walk the walk. 33 The fourth role is to serve as corporate monitor.

Since the public relations/ communications department is the company's voice and also has so major a role dealing with and commenting on public issues, there is a need for constant monitoring of policies and programs to make sure they accord with both the company's commitment and with public expectations. If they fall short, it's the job of the chief public relations officer to agitate for new programs and policies. Failing to do so means, simply, that he/she is not living up to the requirements of the job.

To summarize, the chief public relations officer has four roles: corporate sensor, corporate conscience, corporate communicator and corporate monitor. As corporate sensor and corporate conscience, he/she contributes to and participates in the decision making process. It is his/her job to anticipate changes in the social environment and make sure the corporation's response is in the public interest and accords with public expectations. In the roles as corporate communicator and corporate monitor,

he/she speaks for the corporation both truthfully and timely and makes certain the corporation is delivering on its promises. .

BRANDING

A very famous proverb goes: What is in a name? A rose will still smell the same, even if it is called by another name! 34 However, with the advent of latest technology and changing trends, the time has come when we need to do some rethinking. Today, everything is online and virtual: virtual money, online business and so name or rather branding is the most important facet for anything. Not just any business, but for any particular entity, branding is the key word. A brand is the identity of an entity.

Just think of Marilyn Monroe and the first thing that comes in your mind is flying skirt. When we talk about online business, the brand identity is the foundation for building a relationship with your customer beyond product, distribution, pricing, or location of your business. It plays an integral part behind the success of any product. Brand is the relationship that secures future earnings by securing customerloyalty. Leana Clark (2002), states that, " Usually consumers have lot of choice of products in the same market segment so brand loyalty plays a very important role for your business growth.

A company with high credibility and brand loyalty succeeds in keeping consumers re-buying their product rather than going to a competitor. Statistics tell that it takes five times as much money to gain a customer as it does to retain one. Moreover a satisfied customer also helps in generating word of mouth publicity which increases your potential c u s t o m e r s " . Branding goes beyond marketing. All aspects of your business should reflect

35 and support your intended brand to create a long term and fruitful relationship with your customers.

According to Helen Katz in her book Advertising Principles, A lot of effort goes in developing a brand. It involves more than just picking a catchy name. The following steps may be followed to create a brand: * Define your brand * Determine the objective of your brand * Identify your target audience * Identify the barriers and crush them * Package your brand then sell and market your brand

REPUTATION AND WHY IT MATTERS

The reputation of a company or product is what determines how a strong a product is in the long run and how their customers perceive such a product.

It would be remembered that in 1986, Coca-Cola made a blunder by trying to change the flavour of coke which reduced their sales drastically. This reduction in sales was largely due to the perception customers have about coke. The taste of a product ultimately defines the brand and is also part of what customers perceive when they see the product. So when the taste changes, then of course perception changes. Customers want to see their brands as reliable and constant, and for a company to maintain its reputation, such a company must 36 ensure that it gives it customers what they want. This statement was upported by Gwinavere Johnston (2002), when he said, " Reputation can account for a large portion of a company's market capitalization, and can be its most important long-term asset. It impacts an organization in a myriad of ways, including stock price, and the ability to attract and retain customers and employees. Corporate reputationis based on factors such as ? ? ? ? ? ? Quality of products or

services, Earnings and business performance, Stability and fairness as an employer, Level of integrity in business practices, Degree of honesty and openness, and Involvement in local communities.

Today, with distrust of the corporate world at an all-time high, corporate credibility is an over-riding factor. Whether they like it or not, companies today are at the mercy of public constituencies. That means there is growing recognition of the need to foster a good reputation by developing positive relationships with various publics. "

HOW COMPANIES CAN RESTORE TRUST

If business is to regain the trust it has lost due to questionable ethics and other business practices, it must provide public relations with a seat at the executive 37 evel management table rather than just relying on public relations when a crisis a r i s e s . Consumer confidence is at its lowest point, as evidenced by ongoing studies in 2002, by Schenkein's research partner Roper ASW. Corporate wrongdoing, stock market plunges, and layoffs were cited as reasons for the erosion in corporate trust. Americans put the blame squarely on the shoulders of CEOs, Nigerians also put the blame on those in power and CEOs of large organisation and financial organisations such as banks, insurance companies, investment firms and the likes, who according to Roper, won't be " let ff the hook" easily. Consumers view CEOs as the " bad guys," and blame their greed for the ensuing crises that have elicited their anger. Clearly, we live in an environment where every company is under the microscope and negative business stories appear every day on the front page of our newspapers. According to Jerry Donovan, " Quite literally, public relations is managing relations with various publics, a role that grows

in importance as reputation becomes ever more critical to business success. Companies can restore trust in a number of ways, many involving traditional PR strategies, such as: ? ? ?

Using integrity and fairness as criteria for all business decisions; Maintaining an emphasis on quality of products or services; Openly sharing truthful information with all publics; 38 ? ? ? Actively seeking input from publics and being responsive to concerns; Renewing a commitment to local communities; and Creating forums to encourage dialogue with constituencies. The bottom line is that companies must make it a priority to value the needs of all publics, and to forge good relationships with them. The cornerstone of a good relationship is trust, and trust is based on open and honest communication.

Effective public relations tell a company's story in a way that is accurate, honest, and easy to understand, helping to establish a reputation for credibility. ” A good relationship also requires a willingness to listen, and true public relations is a two-way process. PR professionals recognize that to manage relationships, they must understand andrespectpublic concerns and viewpoints. They must also go a step further, to serve as the public's advocate within an o r g a n i z a t i o n . In effect, corporate public relations professionals frequently play the role of an outsider.

By questioning decisions and their impact on customers, the community, employees, and others, public relation professionals bring the public perspective to an organization, fostering its ability to be responsive to public concerns.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Jacobsen (2002: pg 34) there are two ways to conduct scientific research, one is the qualitative approach the other is the quantitative approach. The qualitative approach is more appropriate for research that aims to get a deeper knowledge about a certain subject, i. e. explorative.

An explorative research method aims to investigate a small number of units since it is used to explore nuanced data (Jacobsen 2002: pg 38). Researchers using a qualitative approach are more into finding how people experience their lives and their goal is rather to come to an understanding rather than to reach a static analysis (Bell, 1999). A quantitative approach on the other hand is more appropriate when the research is a broad spectrum of units since it is a theory testing research method. A research like this has a goal of getting broader knowledge about a certain subject (Jacobsen, 2002: pg 29).

A researcher using this approach collects data and then tries to analyse the relation between the different 40 productions. The researcher measures and uses scientific techniques that can give quantifiable and possible general conclusions. Since Advertising and public relations is all about emotions and catching people's interest. Quantitative research used alone could lead to faulty conclusions because it could give the researcher difficulties when trying to understand attitudes and perceptions among the interviewees.

But when used alongside the qualitative approach, it gives the researcher a broader perspective about the subject area. The researcher shall therefore make use of the survey method and the in-depth interviews (which is a combination of the qualitative and the quantitative research methods).