

EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF CARTOON AND CARTOONING ANIMATION FOR TELEVISION PRODUCT ADVERTISING IN NIGERIA

Benjamin Ande Ogunlade

Abstract

As many traditional forms of advertising and promotion are losing ground to newer media, cartoon and animated cartooning being one of the advertising mixer, very little research exists documenting its effectiveness as a medium of advertising that thrives and triumphs on undue romanticization of the ordinary for products promotional on televisions. This paper therefore discusses the inter-relationship of cartoon and animated cartooning by providing concise historical development of cartoon generally. It also examined the old and recent trends of the media for product advertising on Television commercials against the use of naturalistic models for product promotional in Nigeria. Finally, it enthusiastically espouses the supremacy in the use of cartoons for product advertising in view of its moral, flexible and direct appeal to utilitarian value possessed.

The explosive growth of cartoons and cartooning animation as a novel and viable advertising medium has forced advertising researchers to rethink models of advertising communication and persuasion. The first wave of research in response to this growth developed overarching conceptual models of how cartoons and cartooning animation “works” (Rodgers and Thorson 2000). Now, advertising researchers are moving beyond conceptual models to examine the myriad of paid communication efforts on the Television designed to persuade (Lee 2002). This paper contributes to this second wave of advertising research by illuminating the effective utilization of animation as a formal feature of Television advertisements.

Various studies on cartooning in relation with others concepts whether in art or marketing still prevail in its effectiveness and relationship for product advertising, particularly in Nigerian markets (Morris, 1993). Most recently, many Nigerian advertising industries have been using cartooning for advertising particularly consumer products to various targeted audience. This observable trend or upsurge in cartooning marked the beginning of new era of advertising in most developing countries.

According to Tejumola (2000), cartoon is referred to as a variety of motion pictures that produces the illusion of movement in hand-drawn pictures of stationary objects by photographing next drawing or object in the series to show the subject in a slightly different position and so on. The Oxford dictionary (1992 edition) also defines cartoon as an amusing drawing in a newspaper or magazine, especially one about politics or current events. While many definitions abound on cartoon, it is observed that most stemmed perception of messages each cartoon tend to disseminate to a particular people at a point in time remains the major basis or criteria of defining cartoon concepts.

Historical Development of Cartooning

Origin of cartooning (Animated cartoon) dated back to the silent days is often referring to as silent animation. It was used in optical toys such as the Zoetrope and Reynand's proxinoscope. Several years after standard live active motion pictures were possible the first frame-by-frame animation of objects on film was done by Edwin S. Porter for the Edison company. In 1905 he made "How Jones lost his roll and the Whole Dam family" and the Dam Dog" in which the titles are formed by cut-out letters that move randomly about the screen until they get into line in the right order to spell out the required message. In 1906, Blackton produced another film, "A midwinter Nights" Dream" in which toy dolls were made to appear to move by shifting their limbs slightly between the filming of each frame of film. This was the first example of "puppet animation". The aforementioned techniques were taken up by European Film-makers, such as Segundo de Chomon and Emile Cohl. So also in United States with astonishing transformations in the hand of comic – strip artist, Winsor Mcclay, who produced the first animated cartoons that were fully detailed and had smooth natural movement in 1911. (Encyclopaedia Encarta, 2002 edition). The idea and ideal of combining cartoon and live action was taken up by Walt Disney, after he moved to Hollywood in 1923, with his "Alice in Cartoonland series". This trend has continued and being taken to greatest height in advertising world. (World of Cartooning Journal 1984).

Emergence of Cartoon Development in Nigeria

The earliest works of cartooning in Nigeria is dated back to the colonial era, most especially, at the time when the nation was under the suffocating blanket of the British indirect rule. The pioneer cartoonist in Nigeria as Africa's first generation artist, Akinola Lasekan (1916 -1972) began his career as a textile designer. After Nigeria's independence in 1960, a host of artists emerged as post colonial cartoonists. These include: Joy Ajiboye, Ade Ogundero Bayoor Odunlana, Mooyiwa Original, Kenny Adamson, Mooyiwa Collins, Chins Nworjih, Sanmi Abejide, Femi Jolaoso, Tayo Fatunla, Cliff Ogingo and Dele Jegede. However, the salient characteristic of most cartoonists is the thematic concept at a particular point in time.

In the late 70s and notably the early 80's, there came a remarkable advertisement in Nigeria history of cartooning where multi panel cartooning popularly known as "comic" emerged. Prior to this exploitation, the only medium of story telling by magazines or papers, most especially, fictitious happenings were photography arranged in panel or series that are characteristically rigid and made alive by the enclosed words. Example of such is Atoka (a Yoruba magazine drama series). With the multi-panel cartooning that came up, Ikebe super, super story defunct publications of Wale Adenuga becomes a television series. This multi-panel cartooning became a medium of advertising products on two-dimensional surfaces, most especially in newspapers and magazines. The proliferation of cartooning does not stop as multi-panel achievement only in Nigeria but metamorphosed into usage by electronic media as an effective tool of product advertising.

Product Advertising in Nigeria

Traditionally, product advertising in Nigeria was prominently done through direct contact. This involves physical or personal contact with the prospective buyers through street hawking, sales canvassing, bus-selling. As time passed by, the use of motorbikes and cars were deployed in advertising consumers' products. This was done by using the public address system firmly attached to

the bounty or roof of the car with the advert blowing his vocal-cord with loudspeaker to reach out to prospective buyers. With time, the media became a means of indirect advertising. This means proved relatively effective since unlike direct advertising it has the advantage of reaching more people in a short period of time and space without heavy investment on labor.

During post colonial history of advertising, many firms employed this medium in boosting the image and sales of their product with little or no difficulty. At first it was in black and white or monochromatic images of pioneer magazine or journals such as: The Drum, Atoka etc. in later periods. It began to be celebrated in array of interesting colours projecting the registered trade mark colours of the firm even more, in style; objects that exhibit superlative endowment of the desired qualities are used as symbolic representative. Sexploitation and art of advertising for instance, while advertising a beauty product, a beautiful maiden is used as unrivalled paradigm of beauty such beauty products confer on any user. In a way of achieving this, models are employed and iconize as superlative representative of the product.

Cartoon Usage as an Advertising Mixer in Nigeria

Historically, cartooning as an art was chiefly used in Nigeria as objects of political satire. In its maiden adaptation to advertising was initially relegated to the background as aesthetic complement of products, most especially, those that are targeted at children. Even at that, it is rarely found in major newspapers and magazines. The opinion as at the time seem to see cartoon objects as unserious or frivolous in nature to present products adults can buy. In time it soon became a commonplace to see cartoon objects as intrinsic part of certain billboards which either enlightens or information form for instance, in enforcing traffic regulations, cartooned objects are placed by the roadsides indicating zebra crossing slowdown, men at work, etc.

The seeming unresponsiveness of newspaper and magazine soon became a taste of distant experience as it began to feature prominently as media of advertising certain products not only those targeted or directed of children but also of men and women. This is done by fashioning the cartoon character in a manner consistent with the ideals and qualities of the desired end product or utilitarian value of such consumers' commodity. For instance, in the magazine advertisement of certain consumers' products, the cartoon icon is seen as a symbol of the product more than just a mere representative of the intended purpose. The adaptability and model attribute of cartooning soon find its way into product advertising on electronic media, a premise upon which this paper is based.

In the first quarter of the early 90s, 1991 – 1994, precisely, cartooning was still in its native infancy of development. Most products advertised then have either been out of the market or fortified to appear again in another pack or package. However, most notable among the pioneers is the Michelin's tube man. They hefty muscular torso are made of Michelin Tyres all over, forming the arms legs and the body. The animated tube man is pictured on electronic media television as energetic, long-lasting and durable, unaffected by weather or wear and tear. The supersonic speed made it the choice of every car owner since speed, in automobile, is measure of supremacy.

As one of the pioneer products in employing the concept of cartooning, Elephant detergent made use of artistically finished elephant to drive home the effectiveness of its washing power. The leading elephant, in the scene, removed the ineffective washing detergent and substituted it with powerful elephant detergent which worked wonder to the amazement of the female launderer, who at end of the one minute advert winked and smiled, holding the detergent with her left hand pointing it at

the viewers to show satisfaction at his wonderful washing power. Therefore recommending it as the best every mother could have. Other products followed suit in using cartooning around this quarter products such as: Treetops used tropical palm tree with the product falling from the top to show the naturalness and taste of drinking tree.

Another product is the Drummer air freshener, the drummer icon is well dressed and wherever the air freshener is used, he beats the drum to unleash the scintillating aroma to the room in an interesting variety of styles while in motion. Also, straight to the point advertising was the animated cartooning of the popular insecticide RAID. The insects most especially mosquito was projected battling and thriving in the ambience of impotent insecticide. However, as soon as the house-owner invited the multi-active power of Raid, the animated insects tried to run for cover but could not make it as raid (animated to the actually of the metal container) trampled on all leaving none to survive. More so, dairy product cowbell also employed this tool to showcase minerals that can be gotten from its consumption in a less than a minute advertising slot, the mother was seen preparing the milk using water the animated cartoon of mother was robust chubby and cheeky, a perfect indication of good health. The daughter skips with rope, the father and son struggled along effortlessly with football showing dexterity and at the end, and the secret to the highly innovative performance was the consumption of Cowbell milk.

Animated Cartooning Utilization for Product Advertising in Nigeria

The big boost to cartooning for Nigeria product advertising began around 1995 popularized more by 7up bottling company icon Fido Dido. Thus, a major experiment began in romanticizing with cartooning as a major advertising tool. Therefore, analysis the impact of analyzing the impact of cartooning in products advertising using food and food related products categorized in the course of this research as consumable products, the magnitude of efficacy of the concept can be carefully verified and studied. In the early 2000s, there is re-emergence of the tube man, the cartoon icon of Michelin Company. The latest invention of the tyre company in tubeless wheels made Michelin character force in the branding of the new product. On television, the tube man outruns the former tyre product running through rocky and marshy topography to show strength and durability. It later rolled into the tubeless wheel to echo the brand pay off of the company that power is nothing without control- an advert strategy that has been certified to have an impact on the general acceptance and sales of the new products. Similarly Cowbell which remains one of the most leading products of the most leading product of Promasidor Company contending successfully in Nigeria dairy market. The hedge of the advertising is at first the animated Cowbell that appears on television screen and makes a sound moo of a cow rich in milk and healthy. This was to be substituted during the African cup of nation by a 3-d animal family of a bull, cow and lamb. The cow mother was in the kitchen preparing meal for the family, the father, bull in the yard lifting weight as the son, lamb was playing football. A high point in the electronic adverts is when the son acrobatically kicks the ball into the net. At the end, the whole family gathers to treat themselves to a nourishing taste of cowbell milk.

The impact of cartooning does not end with products, services multinational organizations, firms also employ the means to show adaptability, flexibility and resource fullness. For instance, first bank of Nigeria in one of its numerous electronic adverts has the elephant, the certified logo of the organization, embracing all customers with warmth. All these revealed that the impact of cartooning as an advertising mixer for products cannot be over – emphasized as it offers more and more insight

depending on the concept and style of rendition and the targeted audience. Even though, the sales statistics cannot be perfectly measured as most organizations keep it secret, there is no gainsaying that it has helped in branding and advertising products from off the shelves into the minds of prospective buyers or consumers.

As part of major achievement in animated cartooning in Nigeria, the artistic treatment of the animated cattle family cowbell milk advertising cannot but suggest advancement in our adaptation to current software packages and versatility of Nigeria artists to flow with current trend. In the treatment of the mother, the artist clearly showed strict adherence to African aesthetic guideline this he does by the rounded or robust figure, with emphasized attention of / on the female breast and overly robust cheeks and hips which run contrary to western concept of beauty that epitomizes bony structure of malnourished female with no sensual contours whatsoever. So is the treatment of the father and the son, fleshy and cheeky showing good health and vitality that only cowbell milk provides.

In the electronic media advertisement of Maggi chicken, the artist mixed reality and fantasy to bring out the message of good cooking unlike what we observed in cowbell adz where the entire characters are animated cartoons. The artist portrays wives dressed in native attires being introduced to magi – a robust local hen. The interaction between the hen and the women involved cannot but echo into the minds of mothers, wives and cooks anywhere that the seasoning is meant for no other persons but them. The adverts have no foreign audience in mind. In fact, the meals on display were local dishes not intercontinental, ranging from Ewedu, Banga, Edikaikong and others. More so, the satisfying look in the eyes of the women indicates really that maggi seasoning makes every dish a flavour to savour. However, Onga seasoning in its first promotion campaign used 3-d animation effect of a woman (wife) cooking in the kitchen more than the usual attention on the cooking as observed in the television adverts of magi chicken the artist created the woman with highlights on every detail of her famine appeals. The chubby face was rendered in closeness to reality giving the animation a lively personality. In obedience to the rules of African Art there seems to be a little exaggeration of the breasts (mammary glands) which protrude enormously with the rounded, plump figure of a Calabar maiden coming out of fattening room which cannot but whispers to anyone the benefits of using Onga seasoning.

Raid media advertising share the concept of human animation style, like magi chicken, the animated characters are made to interact with human beings giving them life and creating a realistic but idealistic picture of their virtual existence. For instance, the activities of the insects or invaders remained unperturbed till the house owner brought in Raid and sprayed in the exact location of the insects. The eye contacts, the attempt at running away from the unleashed power of raid and the persistent spraying in their direction by the women, created a real or time to life drama of a hunter and the hunted. In the end, all the insects dropped dead, declaring Raid's victory.

The animation advertisements of Drummer air freshener unlike that of seasonings and milk, themed on social glamour than family. The drummer beat the drum sporadically emanating the sweet aroma of the freshener anywhere it may be found rooms offices cars and so on. It will rather be inferred that the outfit of the drummer and his drum tend to be more contemporary. The grooming of the drummer is western and the drum is foreign with metal girdles around. There tend to be no interaction between the animator and man, thus, making the product advert more of video than cartoon. However, top tea presented a full cartoon television advert slot only the animated top tea packs are seen interacting with one another. The unique oval shape the extra colourful paper pack all

created an aura of uniqueness round the tea even after the product is present in tea cup, the artist goes a long way to show that even the tea animals remain happy and fulfilled when they are being consumed. In all, thematic concepts of every local cartooning either have domestic, social or corporate identity as in the case of services such as: First bank, MTN and IGI.

The television advertisement of Cowbell Milk proves the efficacy of animated cartoon over-exaggeration of details. In similar vein, cartoon costume was made for Mirinda men to further deepen the sales of the beverage. This is similar to the cartoon icon used by Seven-Up Bottling Company in years back, 1991, 1992 to be precise, which has now been revived again the late 2003, that is, Fido Dido, unlike human icon that fails to stand the test of time. The resurgence of cartoons and animated cartoons for television media have proved even suitable for companies or industries services that offer services. For instance, insurance companies like IGI used cartooning to validate the beauty and longevity of their services to customers by constant transformation of the acronyms into a drummer. Drumming the essence of her services and turning back into the same drum. Over the years, Shell, Unipetrol, Allied and Agro- allied industries have employed the use of cartoon in their advertisements owing to its flexibility and longevity. However, it therefore, shows that over 13 years the Nigerian television industries have to a greater extent been dunking the leading slogans of products advertising.

Conclusion

The upsurge of cartoon and animated cartooning for products advertisement as portrayed on television media has no doubt introduce sanity, morality and flexibility into the advertising world. Apart from this, the Nigerian Television industries have shown a remarkable achievement with regards to good usage of animated cartoons for product advertising. Since late 80s, the cartoon icon has been used and still in use as the logo for its durable product without having to modify it to suit taste or fashion. In more recent times, it is often done in child-like manner but without watering down or miniaturizing the truth about the products nor exaggerating them by carefully crafted cartooning.

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