

CURRENT TRENDS IN ADVERTISING: THE POTENCY OF ONLINE ADVERTISING IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

By

TEBU OVIE

*Department of Fine and Applied Arts,
Delta State Polytechnic,
Ogwasli-Uku.*

Abstract

Advertising, which has been defined as an art that is concerned primarily with how to galvanize patronage for a particular marketable product or thing through the use of effective communication, (Akindele and Orhewere, 2004), is indispensable to the marketing objectives of modern day conglomerates, medium as well as small scale entrepreneurial organisations. This paper unveils the fact that advertising in visual form, whether as a billboard design, or in a magazine, or newspaper, online or offline, is largely the work of a graphic designer, an artist. And, with the current popularization of the use of the Internet, advertising has become more affordable, global, and personalized, among other pros. The paper further reveals that online advertising represents a window of opportunities for driving entrepreneurship, thereby encouraging production or manufacture of items/goods, promoting industrial and economic development of the nation. Hence, the paper recommends that government and private sector initiatives should target the exploitation of the advantages that modern approaches of advertising provide.

The Meaning of Advertising

“Advertising as an art is concerned primarily with how to galvanize patronage for a particular marketable product or thing through the use of effective communication”, Akindele and Orhewere, (2004). This implies the conveyance of information about the marketable product to an identified target audience for the purpose of persuading the audience to favourably act in accordance with the content of the information. Advertising can be defined as a sponsored means of bringing information or messages about goods or commodities, social and other ideas, services, brand names, banking products and so on, to the knowledge of members of the public in order to convince them to act in accordance with the intent and design of the advertiser as reflected in the advertising message.

Pristine

Advertising is “an impersonal message, paid for and controlled by a sponsor”, (Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn, 1991). Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn (1991), explained the words *impersonal* and *controlled* in the context of the above succinct expression. That, *impersonal* means the sender and receiver of the message do not interact, adding that the advertising message is sent through a communication medium, and *controlled* means the sponsor who pays for the advertising message determines its content.

Advertising is a subject of discourse in various disciplines. In visual form, advertising is basically about Graphics, and Graphics, otherwise called Graphic Design is a field of study in Fine and Applied Arts. The evolution of modern day technologically driven advertising in visual form is a reflection of the evolution of Graphic Design in the face of emerging technology.

The Essence of Advertising

Advertising is sine qua non for entrepreneurial success. This is because an entrepreneur’s potential client needs to gain knowledge of the existence of available goods or services at a location before he/she can purchase or use them. An author (Barry, 2001), puts it thus: ‘imagine you’ve dropped out of the sky in a parachute, in the dead of the night, in New York City. No one knows you’re there. No one, but you, knows how you got there. Since you’re new in town, no one knows who you are, or how to locate you...’. Although the author’s (that is, Barry’s) above statement was made in the context of a discourse on making one’s content visible on the Internet vis-à-vis the size of the Internet, the principle applies to advertising in general.

It is commonplace knowledge that irrespective of the high value that could be associated with a commodity by virtue of the problem that it has the potential to solve when used or consumed, that commodity will not reach the target audience as long as those that constitute the target audience are unaware of its existence or quality. Hence, the need for advertising.

Effective advertising campaign normally results in favourable response from an audience. In business terms, this implies increased sales of products and growth for a business unit, or increase in volume of trade between geographical, political and economic entities such as countries. This explains, in part, the striking growth of trade between China and Nigeria, as may be deduced from an article that was edited by Charles Okogene in the Saturday Independent of November 9, 2013. In that article, Mr David Zhao, a representative of the BrightWay International Exhibition Corporation Ltd was credited with the statement that the corporation had brought 425 Chinese exhibitors and 1,000 participants to the Lagos International Trade Fair in the last five years from 2007, (Okogene, 2013). It was also disclosed that Mr Zhao stated that since 2008,

Tebu Ovie

Chinese pavilion has been the biggest international hall mostly visited, and added, “the exposure of our companies and their products to Nigerian investors has contributed to the growth of the trade volume between China and Nigeria”. For specifics, Mr Zhao was quoted as saying that the trade volume between Nigeria and China grew steadily to \$10.57 billion in 2012 and reached \$16.02 billion in the first half of 2013, (Okogene, 2013). It should be noted that display of products for audience (exhibition) at the trade fair is a form of advertisement.

Types of Advertising

There are numerous types of advertising that are described by a variety of authors. However, the types of advertising that are described by the authors tend to overlap, one into the other. Some types of advertising are briefly treated below: Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn, (1991), observed that advertising could be classified according to type of audience, source of content and the medium. Some points by the authors are summarised below.

Types of Advertising based on Audience

1. **Trade Advertising**, which is directed to wholesalers and retailers to persuade them to make the advertised products available in their stores. That is, the manufacturer of a product is the sponsor of this kind of advertisement.
2. **Business-to-Business Industrial or Professional Advertising**, which describes the advertising which is directed to fellow business owners or fellow professionals. This is when the businesses or professionals to which the advertisement is directed has a role to play, for instance, a prescription drug may be directed at medical doctors since they are in a position to determine what drugs to prescribe for patients.
3. **Global Advertising**, which is concerned with advertising of companies’ products in different countries simultaneously.
4. **Consumer Advertising**, which is directed to specific demographic groups who are consumers of a given product or service.

Another author, Hanson (2005) explained that consumer advertisements announce the product or service and its price, and tell consumers where they can buy it, thereby, suggesting a localised advertisement. This point becomes glaring when viewed on the backdrop of the explanation on national advertising.

Pristine

National Advertising: According to Hanson (2005), this type of advertising is designed to build demand for a nationally available product or service but does not send consumers out to a particular store.

Regarding classification of advertising by Message Content, some of the aforementioned authors' (Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn, 1991) points are summarised below.

1. **Product Advertising**, which may be compared to the already explained types of advertising except that, it is designed for consumers to buy a specific brand.
2. **Institutional or Corporate Advertising**, which is used to improve attitude towards a company or an organization, and tourge action on desired social issues.
3. **Public-Service Advertisement**, which is a special kind of institutional or corporate advertising that is done by companies or organizations to benefit social causes or charities.

The foregoing is quite similar to **Advocacy Advertising**, as elucidated by Hanson (2005), as advertising that is intended to promote a particular point of view rather than a product.

On classification of advertising by used medium, Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn, (1991), observed, "five media account for most of the revenue earned by print advertisers: newspapers, magazines, billboards, transit, and direct mail". Other mentioned media include television and radio.

On newspaper as a medium for advertising, Rodman, (2006), defines the edge that newspapers have over some other media, in that, they provide easy-to-find advertisements, offer "money off" coupons that the shopper can take to the store, and have "short lead time", meaning an advertiser can place an advertisement just a few days before it runs.

Rodman, (2006), opined that Television as an advertising medium has reach and visual impact, but has the disadvantage of being extremely expensive, in addition to the problem of clutter, which is the glut of commercials that compete for the viewer's attention.

In addition to Newspapers and Television, Rodman, (2006), identifies Direct Mail as a medium for advertising. According to him, (Rodman, 2006), Direct Mail involves catalogs, flyers, coupon packages, and computer generated letters that are sent

Tebu Ovie

through the postal service, thereby giving the advertiser quite a wide range of formats to choose from. High quality glossy prints are possible on some, or all of these formats.

One should be apt to note that the graphic artist is a key player in the design of such print advertisements as enumerated above. Also, the graphic artist is involved in television advertisements that involve still and motion photography, including animations.

Radio is another advertising medium. Radio is relatively affordable to people in comparison with television. Similarly, radio advertisements are cheaper than television advertisements. Rodman, (2006), buttressed this fact in his statement, “radio ads ...tend to be inexpensive”, and added that one problem is that listeners use radio ads (that is, advertisements), like TV ads, as a cue to switch stations.

Other advertising media that were explained by Rodman, (2006), are presented and briefly discussed below:

Yellow Pages: Advertisements are placed on yellow pages because of the concept that while people search for telephone numbers in the book they would equally find the advertising messages. However, Yellow Pages are not produced at short time intervals and advertising information that are placed in the book may no longer be up to date after a short period of time because of changes in the advertiser’s business.

Magazines: Advertising in magazines possesses such advantages as a good “pass-along rate”, meaning that a number of people, beside the purchaser read each copy. They have good shelf life as people tend to keep them and, their glossy surfaces and rich colours make them ideal for art work. This further enhances their appeal.

Akindele and Orhewere, (2004), observed that various media of advertising require graphics to induce readership and viewership, and further listed some of the media as posters, handbills, leaflets, bill-boards and calendar.

The Internet

The word “Internet” is not new in the 21st century AD. Bradley (2002), explained the concept of the Internet as consisting of millions of computers around the world that are connected together, and added that companies, hospitals, schools, and colleges may be permanently connected to the Internet using a network system. This implies that the Internet is an INTERnational NETwork of computers, which Tebu (2011) explained as a global network of computers that utilizes telecommunication devices to transfer data and information between computers that are connected to it.

Pristine

Bradley, (2002) stated, “if you are a home user, you will connect to the Internet when you want”. This denotes the fact that a computer user can decide to be online (and connect to the Internet), or offline (and disconnect from the Internet). Similarly advertising can be online or offline.

The Size of the Internet

As far back as the year 2001, the author of the text book, *Low-Cost Web Site Promotion*, Barry (2001), estimated Internet names as being over 12.5 million, and over 30,000 new names being added daily. Internet names refer to websites. If the number estimated at 30,000 daily new names is correct, and has remained constant rather than growing over the years, then there are more than 165 million new names or websites today. If websites are as many, and a lot of Internet users do not own any website, it logically follows that surfers of the Internet are many times more than the number of websites.

Online Advertising and National Development

Online advertising refers to conveying of advertising information to a target audience through the medium of the Internet. This differs significantly from the earlier conventional methods of advertising that may, at this juncture, be regarded as offline advertisements.

It has been observed that the first noticeable source of income on the Internet is advertisement, (Sammy, 2003). This is possible because of millions or billions of people who browse the Internet and visit websites. An online national daily newspaper, for instance, may generate a high level of online traffic by attracting millions of visitors on a daily basis. The implication is that any advertisement that is placed on the web page of that newspaper will reach millions of people on a daily basis. Thus, a reasonable amount of money could be charged customers for their advertising information or contents that are placed on the web pages of the newspaper. This reveals the potency of online advertising.

Tebu (2011) stated that the Graphic Designer, through the use of web design software, creates web sites that contain different features for the purpose of advertising various products, services, and ideas. In this context, the features of a website such as text, still photographs, videos or animations, diagrams, maps and so on, are used to convey a message, or some messages that are relevant to an advertised commodity or product, a service, or an idea, for instance, for social action.

Tebu Ovie

According to Rodman (2006) the World Wide Web is the most rapidly growing medium for advertising. He, (Rodman, 2006) further observed that whereas it generated practically no advertising revenue in 1995, it was earning more than \$5 billion annually by 2004. This very huge size of advertising revenue that was generated through online revenue as far back as 2004 suggests that currently the value of revenue that is generated through online revenue should be astronomical. The meaning of this, is that online advertising represents the source of income for many people, the source of daily bread for many families in different continents. In other words, online advertising is the source of gainful employment for very many professionals, alleviating poverty, and reducing unemployment rates both nationally and internationally. Invariably, gainful employment reduces crime and social unrest in a nation. Also, it is a known fact that meaningful advertising of relevant products is a major factor that drives production, commerce, and consequently, national economic growth. Also, sheer knowledge of a good market reach through online advertising has the potential of inspiring manufacture of quality goods which, when exported, are capable of attracting revenue (foreign exchange), thereby helping to strengthen national economy.

Current Trends in Advertising

Although traditional advertising media such as the Radio, Television, and Billboards remain current, relevant, or effective in modern times, the Internet is currently heavily engaged for advertising purpose. Today, the Internet has become a unique medium for advertising goods, services, and ideas, and it presents its unique advertising methods and opportunities. However, Rodman (2006) opined that in many ways, web advertisements are a convergence of all former advertisements, that, they are both print and image oriented. This, therefore, could be considered as one of the factors that make online advertisement unique – a media confluence that benefits advertising target audience reach. Thus, the combined advantages of the varied advertising media choices enrich the choice of online advertising, and there is the emergence of various online advertising approaches that mark currency in global advertising trends.

Furthermore, an online corporate author, (Boundless, 2015), observed that Internet advertising provides companies a low cost way to serve personalized advertisements across web and mobile interfaces.

Unique Advertising Opportunities that are Available through the Internet

There are several advertising approaches that are available on the Internet. These approaches represent online advertising opportunities that have the potential of revenue generation for online publishers.

Pristine

An online corporate author, (Boundless, 2015) noted that Internet based online advertising includes display advertising, affiliate marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), and mobile advertising. Another online source, en.wikipedia.com, (Online Advertising, 2015) was more elaborative, that Online advertising, also called online marketing or Internet advertising, is a form of marketing and advertising which uses the Internet to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. The author, en.wikipedia.com, (Online Advertising, 2015) adds that, it includes email marketing, search engine marketing (SEM), social media marketing, many types of display advertising (including web banner advertising), and mobile advertising. The author, en.wikipedia.com, (Online Advertising, 2015) further adds that, like other advertising media, online advertising frequently involves both a publisher, who integrates advertisements into its online content, and an advertiser, who provides the advertisements to be displayed on the publisher's content.

Email advertisements are delivered into the electronic mail boxes of users. Some types of online advertisement were explained by Cesbron (2015) and they include Web banner advertisement, Pixel advertisement, Blog advertisement, and Mobile advertisement. Cesbron (2015) stated that a banner advertisement is the use of 'a graphic image on web sites which come into views on all sorts of web pages and differ significantly in appearance and subject matter'. In other words, banner advertising refers to the use of pictures in one form or the other, in websites, to communicate desired advertising messages. Similarly, it was observed in the site en.wikipedia .com (Online Marketing, 2015) that web banners or banner advertisements typically are graphical advertisements displayed within a web page. In this case, the picture serves as a link which, when clicked upon results in the opening of a new window (or page). Advertisements of this sort are called Pop-up advertisements. Some banner advertisements are hyperlink pictures that are animated, that is they move, usually slowly, in a definite direction on the web page.

Another type of online advertising that was mentioned by Cesbron (2015) is Pixel Advertising, explained as one of the newest and most talked about advertising in which the cost of an advertisement is calculated based on the number of pixels it occupies and it can be an inexpensive way to market a website.

Blogs, which are personal websites that, for instance, are freely hosted on google.com, are used for advertising products. Cesbron (2015) observed that nowadays most Internet users "have personal blogs, through this they try to advertise their products to make profit", and added that this works if the blog owner can produce something different or new with the blog thereby attracting other Internet users.

Tebu Ovie

It has been observed by the corporate authors on www.wikipedia.com, (Online Advertising, 2015) that Mobile advertising is advertisement copy delivered through wireless mobile devices such as smart phones, feature phones, or tablet computers. And that, Mobile advertising may take the form of static or rich media display ads, SMS (Short Message Service) or MMS (Multimedia Messaging Service) advertisements, mobile search advertisements, advertising within mobile websites. According to Cesbron (2015) mobile advertising is indispensable to a successful online marketing strategy.

Other types of online advertisements are Cost Per Click Advertisements, Affiliate Marketing Advertisements, Social Media Advertisements, and Search Engine Advertisements.

Conclusions

The concept and practice of advertising is very sensitive to entrepreneurial development, or business growth. Effective advertising creates a vista of opportunities that snowball into growth in commerce and manufacture of commodities, as well as growth of the service industry, thereby, positively impacting on national development. The foregoing underscores the essence of advertising.

The graphic artist creates advertising designs in visual form. Graphic Design is an integral aspect of Fine and Applied Arts.

Different types of advertising have evolved over the years with societal and technological development. Thus, one way to classify advertising is with regards to media such as Radio, Television, and Print which involve such media as Yellow Pages, Billboards, Magazines and so on. However with the emergence of the Internet, advertising assumed a more dynamic form that effectively combines sound with broadcast and print effects. Also personalized advertisements are served using the Internet. Another pro Internet advertising factor is the relative cheapness of online advertising. Types of online advertising include Affiliate marketing, Search Engine Marketing, Mobile Advertising, Cost Per Click Advertising, Social Media Advertising and so on.

Recommendations

1. Graphic Design, an integral aspect of Fine and Applied Arts, involves the creation of advertising designs that help to push commerce and industry. Hence, the government of Nigeria should beam her light of attention into this area to better appreciate how this aspect of the Arts can better national development.

Pristine

2. The advent of the Internet brought with it numerous positive and legitimate opportunities for individual and corporate economic advancement. Therefore, legitimate entrepreneurs should exploit the medium for local and global reach through online advertising.
3. In view of current government initiative to diversify the Nigerian economy away from heavy reliance on oil revenue, government should frankly examine the place of modern approaches of advertising vis-a-vis market reach, and how this can encourage production and boost the national economy. The growth of Nollywood through a readily available market, that exists both nationally and internationally, is worthy of mention.

References

- Akindele, R., & Orhewere, J. (2004). *A Modern Approach to Graphic Communication*. Ibadan: Adaleef Communications.
- Barry, F. (2001). *Low-Cost Web Site Promotion*. Avon, USA: Adams Media. Boundless. (2015). Types of Internet Advertising. *Boundless Marketing*. Retrieved 02 Dec. 2015 from <https://www.boundless.com/marketing/textbooks/boundless-marketing-textbook/social-media-marketing-15/introduction-to-social-media-and-digital-marketing-98/types-of-internet-advertising-483-10593/>
- Bradley, A. M. (2002). *Internet Technologies: Stage I Award for OCR*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- Cesbron, M. (2015). Different types of online advertising. Retrieved 11 Nov. 2015 from www.prettygoodplan.com/2011/11/different-types-of-online-advertising/
- Hanson, R.E. (2005). *Mass Communication: Living in a Media World*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Hiebert, R.E., Ungurait, D.F., & Bohn, T.W. (1991). *Mass Media VI: An Introduction to Modern Communication*. New York: Longman Publishing Group.
- Okogene, C. (2013, November 9). *Saturday Independent*. P. 5. Online Advertising. (2015). In *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*. Retrieved 2 Dec. 2015 from en.DOTwikipediaDOTorgSLASHwikiSLASHOnline_advertising

Tebu Ovie

Rodman, G. (2006). *Mass Media in a Changing World: History, Industry, Controversy*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Sammy, O. (2003). *Internet Advantage for Business and Research Development*. Benin, Nigeria: Petersam Books.

Tebu, O. (2011). Visual Art/Web Design Patronage for Economic Development in Nigeria. *The Nigerian Academic Forum*, (20)1, 140-145.