

Making Slogans and Unique Selling Propositions (USP) Beneficial to Advertisers and the Consumers

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Abstract

Advertising has been a major factor in its uniqueness at selling goods and services. Though some argued that its purpose is to create awareness, notwithstanding, it is one of the promotional mixes of marketing. However, the paper discussed the use of USP and slogans viz-a-viz advertising. The method adopted for the study relied on secondary method of data generation. The paper also relied on the theory of selective attention and arousal to critically examine the importance of USP and slogans in advertising. The research hence looks at how unique promotional mix can add value to advertising make the best out of the opportunities available them. From the outcome of the discussions the paper suggested in its recommendations that advertisers should ensure that they make their product unique, solve an industrial pain by identifying a gap, be specific and offer proof among others.

Keywords: Slogans, Unique Selling Propositions, Advertisers, Consumers

1. Introduction

Advertising is one great activity in Communication that has being with man right from yore. It is often experienced either consciously or unconsciously by everybody, everyday, if not every hour or minute. It has no doubt assumed great prominence and pervasiveness in all facets of human endeavours. (OKoro, 2005,p.93). In almost every place around us, one hardly goes by without seeing bill boards and spectacles. Neither can one relax without radio sounds and television images, magazine and newspaper pictures, all emanating from one point or the other and demanding persuasive attention. This perhaps evokes advertising and as such, it is everywhere (Akpan, 2006, p. 169; Baran, 2004, p.377).

Primarily, advertising tells and persuades consumers to patronize products, services and idea. This perhaps underscores its basic functions of marketing and communication. Thus every form of advertising is either aimed at achieving great sale of products, so to maximize profit or to provide social services to the public in its fulfillment of persuasive information and communication goal. From the beginning and from its persuasive nature, advertising is known to have grown and achieved a tremendous feat in marketing communications. In Ogbodo's view, (1999,p.49) "advertising has not only become an integral part of our social and economic system, but has grown over the years to assume tremendous proportions both as a business activity and as a social phenomenon". Thus, the development of advertising has no doubt doted great impact in the economic and social transformation of the world today. Arens (2006,p.58) likens the economic impact of advertising to the world as:

A break shot in billiards or pool... he moment a company begins to advertise, it sets of a chain reaction of economic events which is like a force of the shot and the economic environment in which it occurred.

In spite of the great changes and development that have occurred in advertising, its practice and goals remains the same. What is different in advertising today is the level of sophistication it has attained and the increasing scholarly attention it is attracting (Nwankpa, 2007, p.1). The growth in sophistication of advertising practice is predicated on the changing nature of the world (Nwankpa, 2007,p.5). As the world changes, so do advertising. The changes in the media of advertising which has ushered in the computer network, is a major contribution to

the level of sophistication of advertising. More so, the growing complexities in the market place of our times and the increased production of goods demanding for more attention, has made advertising to be sophisticated. It is in this era that advertising rates are highly charged by the media, due to their strengths and changes in technology. To this end, Marsh, et al (2005, p.101) aver that:

Advertising faces severe challenges in the 21st century... And you expect your messages to be noticed in that avalanche of persuasion? A successful and must cut through that cluster. To win consumer's attention, you must conduct extensive research on the client, product, competition and target audience. And you must be creative

Intrinsic in the above assertion of March, et al is that, advertising has assumed a great challenge in this present day situation. It therefore needs more knowledge, skills, and facts in creating a message that would be successful in the market place. This therefore calls for creativity. However, Marsh et al (2005,p.102) argue that creativity alone cannot guarantee a successful advertisement. In fact, creativity probably matters less than the research one conducts, which should lead to a development of one clear message for an advertisement, generally known as the strategic message”.

In every campaign of advertising, the message is the major product. This no doubt greatly contributes to success in a campaign. To successfully create a message of advertising in this challenging era of market place, a copy writer in advertising needs to develop according to Charles and Charles (1988,p.302) a creative strategy which would consist effective elements such as unique selling proposition, brand image strategy, positioning strategy, etc. More so, creating an effective message in advertising includes other format elements. According to Bovee and Arens (1994, p.248) copywriters utilize elements such as headline, the visual subheads, body copy, boxes and panels, slogans, seals and logotypes. However, an effective blend of such elements could possibly and positively result in a successful campaign that would be beneficial to the advertiser and the consumer.

A copywriter may be faced with a plethora of elements to use in preparing and advertising message. However, not all advertising campaigns require use of all elements to package a message. The use of appropriate elements sometimes depends on the nature of the brand of product, services or ideas. In another perspective, there are certain advertising elements which are non-negligible in any kind of campaign of a brand. This paper therefore examines the use of unique selling proposition (USP) and ‘slogans’, as inevitable elements of advertising messages, and as well proffer ways through which they could be made beneficial to both advertiser and the consumer in a campaign. Therefore, advertising viz-a-viz both slogan and USP will be succinct explained.

Advertising: Advertising on its own aims at persuading consumers to buy products, so to maximize profit by the advertiser. It is the sending out of messages to sell goods, ideas, products, messages; via a medium of advertising by an identified sponsor to the target audience with the aim to inform, and persuade the audience to take a specific action

Slogan: Slogan creates continuity, and repetition of a brand in the mind of consumers.

Unique Selling Proposition: Unique Selling Proposition usually outlines and distinguishes a brand from another competing one.

2. Methodology

The research method adopted for this research work relied on secondary data. This is so because the work majorly looks critically on the need for the uniqueness of advertisers to maximize the opportunities available for them in order to book a place in the mind of the prospects.

3. Theoretical Framework

Selective Attention and Arousal Theory was used to carry out this research. The theory posits that individuals have or possess certain features that make them to prefer certain things above others. Iris Beneli, (1997) gives credence to this by explaining that, selective attention and arousal theory “suggested that individuals have a tendency to orient themselves toward, or process information from only one part of the environment with the exclusion of other parts”. Therefore, the work is anchored on this theory since advertisers must ensure they present cogent reasons through the application of effective unique selling proposition as to why prospects should choose or prefer their products or services over and above other competitors in the market.

4. An Understanding of Advertising Slogans and Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Advertising slogans are short, often memorable phrases used in advertising campaigns. (Wikiguote, 2010,p.1). Put differently, advertising slogans are statements that describe what a brand is all about. For a case in point, certain slogans have attitude, like Nike's “just do it”, or a statement of what they are trying to accomplish like Nokia's “connecting people”. All these are expressed in short, simple and concise manner, which make them comprehensive and memorable. Also known as themelines or taglines, advertising slogans are very important elements for a brand. Slogans make it that much easier to increase consumers' retention rate and desire (Kan,

2007, p.3). They however, have two basic purposes. According to Arens (2006,p.424) slogans provide continuity to a series of advertisements in a campaign, and they reduce an advertising message strategy to a brief, repeatable, and memorable positioning statement.

The use of slogans in campaign has been established many years ago. As chronicled bywikiguote (2010,p.1-4).Advertising slogans were used in campaigns for as far back as 1882 by Procter and Gamble on ivory soap and it read: “ivory soap-99⁴⁴ /100% pure”. In 1900s others also followed like Apples, which reads, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away”. Products or brands like Coca-cola’s “Always Coca-Cola” and Debeers’ “Diamonds are forever”, etc, have all created images and are memorable in their consumers’ minds always. Today, Glo’s “We got people talking”, and Peugeot’s “Car for Nigeria”, always remains fresh and memorable in many of their consumers’ minds too.

Unique selling proposition on the other hand is a concept that was developed by Rosser Reeves a leading advertising man in 1960 and published in his book titled “Reality in Advertising”. In his book, he outlined the unique selling proposition (USP) as the central concept which had important impact in his philosophy of advertising. The concept of unique selling proposition in advertising simply emphasizes that, the message of a company should show a distinctive quality of a brand from other competing ones to be able to convince and persuade a consumer to patronize it. According to Reeves, as noted in Belch and Belch (2002,p.215).

Each advertisement must make a proposition to the consumer...each advertisement must say to each reader “Buy this product and you will get this benefit”... the proposition must be one that the competition either cannot or does not offer. It must be unique either in the brand or in the claim. The proposition must be strong enough to move the mass millions; this is to pull over new customers to your brand.

However, USP can be better captured in the following words; what makes you more unique, more valuable, and more visible in the market? In our highly competitive world, you have to be unique and fill a special niche to be successful in the marketplace. Yet one of the most harmful mistakes marketers and advertisers make is not being unique and positioning themselves as the best choice in the market. How do you show that your product or service is the best?Use a Unique Selling Proposition or "USP". Having a USP will dramatically improve the positioning and marketability of your company and products by accomplishing 3 things for you:

1. Unique - It clearly sets you apart from your competition, positioning you the more logical choice.
2. Selling - It persuades another to exchange money for a product or service.
3. Proposition - It is a proposal or offer suggested for acceptance.

Today, the concept of unique selling proposition is so important in crafting advertising messages, such that, it has become a dominant element in most campaigns. These elements are usually crafted either in words of mouth written words or in action(s) too. This could be observed in radio, television and print advertisements. The use of slogans and unique selling proposition as elements in advertisements may seem to be similar, but they both have different functions and purpose in a campaign. Slogans creates continuity, and repetition of a brand in the mind of consumers, while the unique selling proposition usually outlines and distinguishes a brand from another competing one. However, both elements are used to achieve a same target of a campaign. Their usefulness is therefore necessary and could be tenable, if used appropriately.

5. A Brief Overview of the Advertiser and the Consumer

It has been argued that, advertising practice still remains within the ambit of three parties-the advertiser, the agency and the media. However, as a business and marketing communication tool, advertising could best be viewed as a phenomenon that involves two main parties-the advertiser and the consumer. As a marketing communication tool, it entails formulating persuasive messages about products, services or ideas and calling the attention of the consumer through such messages, so to patronize such products, services or ideas. Advertising is a form of communication, and it shares the same model which consists of the source and the receiver. In this view of advertising, the advertiser and the consumer are necessarily tied together.

The advertiser is the person or an organization that has a product, idea, or service and formulates a message about it to share with another person or organization, so to make them patronize such products, services or ideas. A consumer on the other hand, is the person, or organization with whom the advertiser shares his thoughts or information about products, services or ideas, and is expected to react positively towards such information. The advertiser and the consumer are important to each other. Without the advertiser a consumer will not exist and vice versa.The dependency nature of the advertiser and the consumer is of great importance to the formulation of advertising messages. Advertisements are aimed at presenting products to consumers for their satisfaction. Similarly, advertisement also aims at persuading consumers to buy products, so to maximize profit by the advertiser. This clearly indicates that, both the advertiser and the consumer share a-two-way mutual benefits in

advertising. To successfully reap the benefits, it is important for the advertiser to create advertising messages, using elements that would be of benefit to him and the consumers.

An advertising campaign is most beneficial when it creates satisfaction for both the consumer and the advertiser, No advertiser would embark on a campaign that would not be beneficial to him. Neither would a consumer wish to patronize a product that is of no benefit to him. Both parties therefore, need mutual satisfaction. When messages of advertising are created such that, a consumer derives a maximum satisfaction from the use of element which shows a distinctive quality of a product from other competing ones, and as well arrests the attention of a consumer, thereby convincing him to patronize such goods, then there is the guarantee for a mutual benefits of both the advertiser and the consumer from a message.

6. Utilizing Ad Slogans/USP for Advertiser/Consumer's Benefit.

The use of slogans and unique selling proposition in advertising messages serves a great deal to both the advertiser and the consumer. Their use requires creativity while the need to make an effective and efficient creativity of a campaign copy is worth the efforts in this 21st century practice of advertising. The trend is no more about what product is unique, but “what makes it more unique, more valuable, and more visible in the market place of many products, ideas, and services” (Hockin, M., 2002,p.1). Advertisers are in an era where they are faced with the saying , “differentiate or die.” In this highly competitive world, every advertiser needs to be unique and fill a special niche to be successful in the market place. Therefore, to make slogans beneficial for both the advertiser and the consumer in advertising campaign it must adhere to the following rules:-

1. A slogan must be concise in order to be effective. It is most suitable to create a slogan that is short and clear. This would be more easily remembered by a consumer, since the human memory is limited. According to Kam (2007, p.1) slogans taking up a whole sentence to convey your brand are less effective than slogans with just 3 words. Therefore the less words, the easier to remember a slogan. With this kind of a message, consumers would always remember to patronize the product, thus making it beneficial to both the advertiser and the consumer.
2. Again, it is usually more rewarding when a slogan is made precise. This makes it effective and beneficial when the short words are comprehensive and meaningful. It is good for a slogan to tell exactly what it tries to achieve. When a slogan is confusing, consumers keep guessing to find its meaning in the brand. And this can eventually turn a customer off a brand when it becomes harder to understand the brand.
3. More so, a slogan could be accompanied or created with a logo. This no doubt makes it more effective as an advertising unit of its own. This strategy can be rewarding when it creates lasting image in the minds of consumers thus making them loyalist of the brand. This marketing business strategy pays greatly to both the advertiser and the consumer, as it enhances both easy identification of a product, thus saving consumer the stress and doubt on the one hand, and creating an increase in patronage for the advertiser in profit making through sales on the other hand.

7. Using USP/ Slogan to Maximize Profit

Not only slogans could be made beneficial to the advertiser and the consumer, the use of unique selling proposition also makes gains possible. To achieve this, a copywriter needs to take steps as follows:

- a) The use of major benefit of a product to create a unique selling proposition is beneficial to both the advertiser and the consumer. Thus, should be made blunt to your consumers so to explain why the benefit is important to them. This should be thought in terms of what the product does for a customer and the result a customer desires from provision of a service like yours.
- b) Be unique in the creation of the unique selling proposition (USP). This entails separation of the major quality of a product from the competing ones and making it known to a consumer in an appealing and convincing manner. An advertiser or copy writer could achieve this through description of a good quality of the product, or making an offer of the product's unique quality to the consumer. It could also be inform of a guarantee. E.g . “If it is not Panadol, then we will refund your money”.
- c) Furthermore, the advertiser could adopt a problem solving approach to state the unique selling proposition (USP). To do this, a copywriter needs to identify which needs are going unfulfilled within the local market or the industry. This entails knowing or identifying the “gaps” that exist between a current situation. For a case in point, “the Indomie fast food saves times”. This solves a problem to many students and business people who would not spend much time but ensure they eat at home before going to work or school.
- d) It pays both the advertiser and the consumer to be specific and offer proof in unique selling proposition (USP). Most consumers usually assume that most advertisements are deceitful. This throws them in a skeptical state of being. However, when a unique selling proposition (USP) tells exactly what the product is capable of doing and is confirmed by a consumer through a trial, then more patronage of the

product is gained by the advertiser due to the satisfaction derived from the product by the consumer as stated in the unique selling proposition (USP).

- e) Unique selling proposition also needs to be stated in a single, clear and concise sentence. A copywriter or advertiser achieves this when he is able to compress all the detail qualities of a product into an appealing, and harmonious short sentence which does not confuse, but clears the product qualities.
- f) The need to integrate the unique selling proposition into all forms of advertising campaign is a great deal. This surely brings benefit to the advertiser and the consumer in that; it is easily noticed and identified in all marketing materials such as business cards, brochures, flyers, and signs. Others may include phones, letters, post –cards, websites and internet marketing, e.t.c.
- g) The unique selling proposition of a campaign should be able to deliver its promises. Such a message should caption what the product can actually do or show proof of its quality, so to satisfy consumers. Only then their attention would be effectively captured and a great response would be gained from them. A strong unique selling proposition could make business a big success or failure if it does not deliver, thereby ruining the product's image or reputation.

8. Conclusion

The use of effective and excellent slogans and unique selling proposition in advertising campaigns could really serve a great driving force in building successful business. To achieve this, advertisers should give special attention to copywriting by ensuring effective blend of the elements. More so, the act of copywriting deserves effective research making to be backed up with experienced personnel. Only then slogans and unique selling propositions could make a business noticed so to be beneficial to both the advertiser and the consumer.

9. Recommendations

In order for advertisers to break even at this competitive age, they must recognise the importance of USP and then try as much as possible to keep-up with the followings along with the suggestions of Hockin, (2002).

Use Your Biggest Benefits: Clearly describe the **3 biggest benefits** of owning a product or service. Prospect doesn't care if you offer the best quality, service, or price. You have to explain exactly WHY that is important to them. Think in terms of what your business does for your customer and the end-result they desire from a product or service like yours. So, what are the 3 biggest benefits you offer? Present them to the prospect... 1, 2, 3.

- a) Be Unique: The key here is to be unique. Basically, your USP separates you from the competition, **sets up a "buying criteria"** that illustrates your company is the most logical choice, and makes your product or service the "gotta have" item. (Not your competitor's.) Write your USP so it creates desire and urgency. Your USP can be stated in your product itself, in your offer, or in your guarantee:
 - **PRODUCT:** *"A unique pain reliever panadol that makes you whole instantly."*
 - **OFFER:** *"U can be free of pains if you learn to stay with your panadol regularly."*
 - **GUARANTEE:** *"If it is not panadol then we will refund your money."*
- b) Solve an Industry "Pain Point" Or "Performance Gap": Identify which needs are going unfulfilled within either your industry or your local market. The need or "gap" that exists between the current situation and the desired objectives is sometimes termed a "**performance gap**". Many businesses that base their USP on industry performance gaps are successful.
- c) Be Specific And Offer Proof: **Consumers are skeptical** of advertising claims companies make. So alleviate their skepticism by being specific and **offering proof** when possible.
- d) Condense Into One Clear And Concise Sentence: The most powerful USPs are so perfectly written, you cannot change or move even a single word. Each word earns you money by selling your product or service. After you get your USP written, your advertising and marketing copy will practically write itself!
 - Integrate Your USP Into ALL Marketing Materials: Variations of your USP will be included in the all your marketing materials such as your advertising and sales copy headlines; business cards, brochures, flyers, & signs; your "elevator pitch", phone, and sales scripts; letterhead, letters, & postcards; website & Internet marketing.
- e) Deliver on Your USP's Promise: Be bold when developing your USP but be careful to ensure that you can deliver. Your USP should have promises and guarantees that capture your audience's attention and compels them to respond to you. Having a strong USP can make your business a big success or a big failure if you don't deliver on it thereby ruining your reputation.

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