

## **Book Review**

### **Book Title: Marketing in Nigeria: concepts, principles and decisions:**

Afritowers Books.<sup>1</sup> Second Edition. 669 pages, ISBN 978-33537-7-2

**Authors: Agbonifoh, B, Ogwo, E., Nnolim, D. and Nkamnebe, A. (2007).**

The text is split in four parts and has 29 chapters. In the first part, there are five chapters that provide background reading. The marketing analysis discourse is then undertaken in the seven chapters that make up Part 2. In part 3, marketing decisions are discussed in a further ten chapters (13 to 22). Part 4 wraps up the text in the remaining seven chapters.

Written by seasoned Nigerian academics drawn from four highly ranked Nigerian Higher Education Institutions – University of Nigeria, University of Benin, Nnamdi Azikiwe University and Abia State University – Marketing in Nigeria is a positive step in the right direction on HEI collaborative engagements.

Chapter 1 provides a historical background on the development of marketing in Nigeria – highlighting the introduction of the subject as a stand-alone programme at leading citadels of higher learning such as the University of Nigeria Nsukka and the University of Benin. It highlights the introduction of professional bodies such as the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria (NIMN) as well as the Association of Advertising Practitioners of Nigeria (AAPN).

In chapter 3 – on the marketing-mix, there is further insight on the kinds of products to make, how to promote these, and how these can be appropriately priced and distributed. This chapter also takes the student through an illustration of how government policy has influenced the marketing mix with initiatives such as the structural adjustment programmes (SAP) and their implications on the pricing strategies of Nigerian businesses and/ or marketers. Overall it is persuasive to suggest that the bulk of part 1 is devoted to the constituents of the marketing environment.

In part 2, three chapters are devoted to understanding consumer markets and buying behaviour. In chapter seven in particular, the discussion on consumer behaviour is quite detailed with a discussion of western models such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and reference to leading authors in the field such as Schiffman and Kanuk. However, some out-of-date sources are mostly used for example, in Table 7.1 on the stages of the family life cycle the information dates as far back to Wells and Guber (1968). The same can be said for Schiffman and Kanuk (2007) which has been updated a number of times since the 1978 edition referred to within the text.

Moreover the illustration of Maslow's theory could have been represented diagrammatically and pitched in the Nigerian context where physiological needs could have been clearly linked to food and water (or water shortages); safety needs discussed on ebbing police response via 999 calls and growing presence of Vigilante groups such as Bakassi Boys in community protection –or even police command initiatives like *Operation Sweep* introduced by the Lagos State government to rid society of bad eggs under Marwa's regime as governor; Belongingness – e.g. rise of cults in Nigerian HEIs as a negative dimension and the National Youth Service Corps scheme (NYSC) as a positive initiative by the government initiated as far back as 1973 by General Gowon and still deemed relevant over three decades on in 2007.

Other examples could have included debating societies, drama clubs, press clubs and boy scouts and girls guides that pervade Nigerian secondary schools and universities; on esteem needs there are clear cultural nuances such as the preference by professionals to incorporate titles to their names e.g. Engineer Okeke, Architect Okafor and Accountant Okoye etc. It must be said that in part 2 there was no need for three

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chapters as chapter 6 is rather short (10 pages) adding very little value to the discourse and so is chapter 8 even with all its models – which can of course be subsumed into chapter 7.

In part 3 on marketing decisions – marketing planning and the marketing-mix are discussed in separate chapters. Two chapters particularly stand out -Chapter 14 on Marketing Planning and Chapter 18 on Advertising and Publicity. In chapter 14, on the one hand, the authors present an elaborate discussion on marketing planning, opening the topic with definitions which are closely followed by an outline of the merits and demerits or limitation of the marketing planning process. The discourse then moves into identifying what constitutes the marketing planning process.

Chapter 18 on the other hand, unpacks the discourse on marketing communications highlighting elements such as advertising, personal selling, publicity and sales promotions. In this chapter also there is a discussion of communications processes with a bias on advertising, its models (including the AIDA and Colley's models) and objectives. This is tactfully linked to media organisations in Nigeria which were deftly used for further illustration. In all this, however, while part 3 makes an interesting read there are three critically problematic areas.

First, it is rather worrying that chapter 3 on the marketing mix - is painstakingly revisited in seven separate chapters (15 to 22) in the part. This endeavour could have been very much consolidated and the length of the book very much curtailed to ensure maximum impact on the reading audience. Second, in chapter four, outdated sources are frequently cited such as Fox and Wheatly (1978), Kotler (1980), Nwokoye (1981) and worse still Rewoldt, Scott and Warsaw (no date)! Moreover the marketing planning discourse without graphically illustration may limit the capacity of students or reading to get a proper grasp of the intended discourse. Third, in chapter 18 there was a bias on advertising compared to publicity with latter getting only a brief commentary at the end of the chapter which is ironically titled advertising and publicity.

Part 4 in its seven chapter composition touches upon the 'Special Areas of marketing' considers those aspects of not-for-profit marketing; services marketing and the marketing of agricultural products (a unique, contextual exposition on marketing in a developing world context) amongst others. Chapter 23 on 'non-businesses marketing' - i.e. not-for-profit marketing – starts off by asking whether marketing principles could be applied to religious groups, academic institutions, the police and Voluntary organisations etc.

It discusses non-business organisations ranging from educational establishments such as Ambrose Alli University (formerly Bendel State University), the War Against Indiscipline (WAI) campaign introduced under the Buhari-Idiagbon regime post 1983; the mobilisation of self-reliance, social justice and economic recovery (MAMSER); the Catholic Church and its dwindling congregation numbers and family planning initiatives amongst others.

There is also an attempt to categorise not-for-profit organisations into public versus private sector initiatives in what the authors describe as government-owned and privately-owned organisation (Table 23.1). Overall, the chapter highlights similarities in marketing considerations in both commercial and non-commercial organisations with a subtle commentary on the advent of social marketing

In Chapter 24 on 'marketing services', the authors provide some insight into the service industry with discussions bordering on small to medium sized enterprises including the vocational trade – auto mechanics, plumbers, carpenters etc. It also discusses the 4Ps of the marketing-mix as being applicable in the context of services. However, it ignores a very important point – the main distinction between services and products in terms of intangibility, inseparability, variability and homogeneity. With this omission also comes a neglect of the extended marketing-mix also referred to as the additional 3Ps of marketing – people, process and physical evidence – which are more readily applicable to the marketing of services.

Chapter 25 sheds some light on 'marketing agricultural products' – a major employer of a huge part of the Nigerian population. Agricultural production is discussed as a basis of economic development and leading sub-sector in the non-oil sector. Marketing of agricultural products is also evaluated with key insight on what to produce, how to produce, when and where to buy and sell etc. These marketing decisions are very critical in understanding how the agricultural sector could be better marketed.

The growth of trade associations and marketing boards are also documented. With the latter projected to have assumed the role of acting on two fronts – socially and politically. In the former capacity the role of trade associations are to provide succour to their members including financial assistance. In the latter case, however, the trade associations were shown to act as pressure groups in lobbying the authorities (i.e.

government) to ensure adequate supply, maintenance and improvement of facilities at traditional open markets. There was also a discussion of the contribution of food processing industries to the development of the agricultural sector with a mention of major players such as the likes of PZ (Patterson and Zochonis); Cadbury, Nigerian Flour Mills and Tropic Foods etc.

Finally the chapter highlights the role of marketing boards – such as the groundnut board, Cocoa Board, Cotton Board and Nigerian Grains Board etc - from their humble beginnings in the late 1970s. These marketing boards were also stated to have been replacement for British multinationals such as John Holt, UAC and Lever Brothers (a division of Unilever).

However, the replacement found in the marketing boards fell out of favour with the authorities in the mid to late 1980s and were subsequently scrapped in 1987. What the text does not say however is to provide the reader with the initiatives that have been introduced since the scrapping of the marketing boards. It is arguable therefore that the authors provide a historical rather than contemporary exposition on the development of agricultural products marketing in Nigeria.

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