



## MARKETING MANAGEMENT AND MARKET GROWTH: THE NEXUS

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### ABSTRACT

*Marketing Managers are partly responsible for the growth of the companies or businesses they are part of. They are principally to generate the growth of the company's markets to ensure the long term survival and even the permanent existence of the company. It is again their remit that the marketing department's pillars or thrusts are well entrenched to withstand the rigorous competition to be put up by the company's competition. They have an arduous responsibility to ensure that the marketing department plays the marketing "game" fairly without violating the rules to attract any sanctions from the ombudsman or overseer of the marketing game. But marketing needs the cooperation of all functional players in the company: R & D, Operations, Procurement, Purchasing, Human resources management, I.C.T, Finance, Accounting, Legal and Production/Engineering. Seeking to grow the company's markets is not a bed of roses. There are problems to be encountered in the course of pushing the market growth agenda. With careful marketing re-engineering they can overcome, albeit over a long period of time. Obviously the path of marketing is littered with thorns and the 'readiest' soldier is the one to tread on the path.*

**Keywords:** Marketing management, Market growth, Ghana

### INTRODUCTION

In managing organisations, the top management team entrusted with the mandate of seeing to the running of the organisation, each has his role spelt out clearly for him. It is his remit

to see to it he performs it creditably for overall organisational success. They all are to see to the synergistic blending of all the functional forces to generate organizational effectiveness and efficiency. At least, there should be a continuous increase in performance. Top management is to ensure the overall health of the organization, in case of any organizational pathology, organizational clinicians must be called upon to remedy the organizational 'disease'. The top management mission of ensuring the very day organizational health cannot be shirked as it can lead to the collapse of the organization. The everyday progress of the organization is a mission that cannot fail to deliver. The head of the Research and Development department is to ensure that new product ideas are handled professionally and new products come out of the ideas. Procurement and purchasing must ensure 'prudent' buying that at the end of the day, there is a reduction in the newer of buying items and other raw materials for production. Production and engineering...up to Human Resource Management must all play their part for the permanent existence of the organization. The organization's growth and development is everyone's remit.

Can the organization keep on producing good after good if there are no markets for the organization's goods? The answer is an obvious no. What then should marketing do? Marketing management is to professionally prospect for markets for the company's goods and services and ensure that these markets continuously grow in size and volume for the organization to scale up its volume of production large scale production should commensurate with expanding markets. The organization cannot tolerate a surplus after production. The company's markets should absorb all what the organization produces. Distributors, dealers, agents, representatives of the company's production chain must be assisted and encouraged to increase their demand of products they take from the organization. All the moral and technical support they need to increase their capacity must be given. The company eventually is the winner at the end of the day. Marketing's full collaboration, cooperation, consultation, coordination and total integration of the organization for the common cause is important.

Does Marketing Management have any relationship with continuous market growth of the services or products of company? Is it empirically wise to state that marketing management has a principal role to play in the continuous market growth of the services or products of a company? If there is a persistent and continuous market growth for the services or products of a company, is it appropriate to attribute it to marketing management? If for any reason the owners of an organization decide to dismiss the marketing management team of a company because the

markets of the company's products keep on declining, will they be justified for that? Normally, marketing management is general managerial, it is a collective activity and therefore to blame only the company's marketing department for the non-growth or the decline in the company's markets. A company fouerele is either imitating or pricing its products lower than yours to attract more traffic or even competitors may find ways to outmanoeuvre you. An in-depth investigation is always needed.

The central objective or rationale for this article is to establish or find out the relationship between the marketing management of a company and the growth in the markets of the company's products or services. The clear link between the two, (i.e. marketing management and market growth) is what we want to establish. Whether the link is strong or weak will be found out empirically.

It is hoped the outcome of this enterprise will be of benefit to students and practitioners of marketing. At last, they are going to appreciate the fact that it is or it is not marketing management who should be blamed when a company's markets for its products and services do not show any sign of growth.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Marketing Management's main thrust and skill is demand management, namely to influence the level, timing and composition of demand in the pursuit of the company's objectives. Marketers spend most of their time trying to build the level of demand. Under some circumstances, such as when there is over demand, marketers must try to reduce demand or change its timing or composition (Ansoff, 1990). The challenge of building demand by marketers starts with getting customers, keeping customers, and growing customers. The three must be elaborated. Getting customers starts with locating prospects. Today most markets are characterized by an abundance of supplies and brands. There is a shortage of customers, not products (Kotler, 1999). Marketers are today increasingly taking responsibility for lead generation. By turning good leads over to their salespeople, they give their salespeople more time to sell. Lead generation (ibid) is a three-step process: defining the target market; using communication tools to gather leads; and qualifying the leads.

No company in its right mind tries to sell to everyone. Once the target market is chosen, it is relatively easy to identify the names of potential buyers. As the company deepens its knowledge of the target market, what it wants; what it buys; where and when it buys; how it buys; and so on, the company improves its ability to find good leads. A company can use several tools to gather prospect names. It can use advertising, direct mail, telemarketing and trade show exhibits. Not all leads are worthwhile. Companies rightly draw a distinction between suspects and prospects. Today's smart companies do not see themselves as selling products; they see themselves as creating profitable customers. They not only want to create customers, they want to "own" them for life. The marketer wants to own the customer, to "loyalize" him. It goes further. The marketer wants to increase his share of the customer's business constantly. He wants not only to be the sole supplier of a particular product but to supply more of whatever the buyer buys. That is known as pursuing share of customer. The aim of affinity marketing is creating and owning a "customer lifestyle". Developing a new customer into a stronger and more loyal customer involves moving that customer through several stages (Jain, 1995). The main customer development stages are: first-time customer, repeat customer, client, advocate, member, partner and part-owner (Kotler, 1994). The first-time customer will end up with a feeling about the purchase and the supplier. Before buying, he had developed a certain expectation, based on what others had said, what the seller had promised, and his general past experience with similar purchases. After buying, he will experience one of five levels of satisfaction: highly satisfied, satisfied, indifferent, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied. The probability that the new customer will buy again is strongly related to his level of satisfaction with the first purchase. He will be a "lost customer" if he is very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, or even indifferent. Very satisfied customers will be less likely to find another supplier who they believe can satisfy them at the same high level. Xerox reports that totally satisfied customers are six times more likely to repurchase Xerox products over the next eighteen months than are satisfied customer (Kotler, 1994). Companies that want to attract repeat customers must periodically survey their customers' level of satisfaction.

Companies find it very useful to classify customers by their "depth-of-repeat". Longer-tenured customers are more profitable because of four factors: One, retained customers buy more over time if they are highly satisfied. Two, the cost of serving a retained customer declines over time. Three, highly satisfied customers often recommend the seller to other potential buyers. Four, long-term customers are less price-sensitive in the face of reasonable price increases by

the seller pursuing profitable customers is very important. The objective is to grow sales, but it does not mean every conceivable customer must be pursued. Marketing has the main responsibility for achieving profitable revenue growth for the company. Marketing must identify, evaluate, and select market opportunities and lay down strategies for achieving eminence, if not dominance in target markets. Marketing management has been teaming up with R & D and occasionally meet customers, work closely with other departments on new projects, benchmark competitors' products, solicit customer reactions to proposed new product designs, and conditionally improve the product based on customer feedback.

Peters (1995) in a survey of excellent companies in U.S.A found out that innovative companies through their marketing management staff are usually good at producing concessionally viable new widgets; innovative companies are especially adroit at continually responding to change of any sort in their environments. As the needs of their customers shift, the skills of their competitors improve, the mood of the public per turbates, the forces of international trade realign, and government regulations shift, these companies tack, revamp, adjust, transform and adapt. In short, as a whole culture, they innovate,

Do marketers face challenges in their bid to grow from markets for their products? It is obviously yes for there are economic and infrastructural problems to contend with (Cateora and Graham, 2005). Marketing is constantly faced with the challenge of detecting and providing for new levels of consumption, and marketing efforts must be matched with ever-changing needs and wants. Economic development presents two-sided challenge. First, a study of the general aspects of economic development is necessary to gain empathy regarding the economic climate within countries. Second, the state of economic development must be studied with respect to market potential, including the present economic level and the economy's growth potential. The current level of economic development dictates the kind and degree of market potential that exists, while knowledge of the dynamism of the economy allows the marketer to prepare for economic shifts and emerging markets. One indicator of economic development is the extent of social overhead capital, or infrastructure in the economy. Infrastructure represents those types of capital goods that serve the activities of many industries. Included in a country's infrastructure are paved roads, railroads, seaports, communication networks, and energy supplies – all necessary to support production and marketing. The quality of an infrastructure directly affects a country's economic growth potential and the ability of an enterprise to engage effectively in

business. Infrastructure is a crucial component of the uncontrollable elements facing markets. Without adequate transportation facilities, for example, distribution costs can increase substantially and the ability to reach certain segments of the market is impaired. To a marketer, the key issue is the impact of a country's infrastructure on a firm's ability to market effectively. Business efficiency is affected by the presence or absence of financial and commercial service infrastructure found within a country – such as advertising agencies, warehousing storage facilities, credit and banking facilities, marketing research agencies, and quality-level specialized middlemen. Generally speaking, the less developed a country is, the less adequate infrastructure is for conducting business. A country may have the ability to produce commodities for export but cannot export them because of an inadequate infrastructure.

How important is marketing to the achievement of a company's goals? Unfortunately, marketing is not always considered meaningful to those responsible for planning the business. Corporate planners are more production oriented than marketing oriented and tend to ignore or regard marketing as an inferior economic activity. Given such attitudes, corporate planners generally are more concerned with the problems of production, investment, and finance than the problems of efficiency of marketing (ibid).

According to Cateora and Graham (2005: 252), there is a strongly held opinion (albeit wrong) that an economical system must first have the capacity to produce before the level of consumption and distribution becomes a problem. With this concept in mind, the developing nation invested \$20 million in a fertilizer plant without making provisions for the sale and distribution of the product. After a few weeks of production, the plant accumulated a huge inventory it was unable to distribute effectively. Marketing problems had been ignored, resulting in excess inventory; the plant had to stop production, while a severe shortage of fertilizer existed in a nearby area. The country had production capability, but the product could not be distributed. There are some inhibitions in the way of marketing management in their attempt to grow markets. They have a lot of obstacles to overcome. But seeing to the growth of their markets is a duty they cannot shirk for most companies, their survival hinge on their markets, which must be continuously growing to cope with the rise in production levels. For to production, always carrying excess inventory is not a situation they will tolerate. They will start asking questions: what is happening to our marketing? Marketing efforts must be keyed to each situation, custom tailored to each set of circumstances.

Marketing is an economy's arbitrator between productive capacity and consumer demand. The marketing process is the critical element in effectively utilizing production resulting from economic growth; it can create a balance between higher production and higher consumption. Marketing is instrumented in laying the ground work for effective substitution. An efficient distribution and channel system and all the attendant middlemen metal production capacity and resourced with consumer needs, wants, and purchasing power.

## **METHODOLOGY OF STUDY**

The study is to find out the role of marketing management in the growth of their companies' markets. Swartz et al; (1996) in a study in U.K on financial services in the association of marketing strategy planning with overall marketing success used a similar approach of interviewing senior executives and marketing staff before subsequent development of questionnaires for 1,014marketing staff of financial services across U.K.

## **POPULATION FOR THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in Cape Coast, Takoradi, and Accra and 140 organizations were sampled. Self-administered questionnaires were given to all the 140 establishments. After a period of three weeks, 105 of the questionnaires were retrieved giving a response rate of 75%. The sample spuns the following: Museums and Monuments, Hospitality facilities (Hotels, Guest houses, Motels, Night rest stops, Beach resorts, Holiday Inns, etc.), Restaurants, Cement manufacturing company, Textbooks sales outlets, Petrol and gas Filling stations, Pharmaceutical Retailing and off the shelf dispensing drugs companies, Consumer Electronics shops, Credit Unions, Micro Finance Institutions, Rural Banks, Commercial banks, Savings and Loans companies, Furniture shops, Building Materials shops, Stationery shops, Fruit and Juice Processing company, Personal and Body Care Products distributors, Telecommunications companies, Bar soap Manufacturing company, Oil Palm company, Cocoa Buying Company, Cocoa Processing Company, Flour Processing company, Wood and Veneer Processing company, Used Electronics Appliances shops, Interior Design and Decoration enterprise, Radio and T.V. Companies, Consultation enterprises, Agro-Processing Machines Fabrication enterprises, Aluminium Cooking Utensils enterprises, Insurance Companies (selling life and motor-vehicle

insurance), Printing Presses, Used Vehicles sales outlets, Made-in-Ghana Textile Prints and Imported Wax prints shops, Alcoholic beverages distributors, Non-Alcoholic beverages distributors, and Real Estate Companies/Developers.

## **ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

Is it your cardinal objective as a marketing management to perpetually grow your market for continuous survival of your company?

The response was yes and further added that it is “heavily herculean” to grow a company’s markets since the onus is on the entire organization and not only the marketing departments. Even the company’s internal market in each case has a role to play.

In your opinion as a marketer, what is the best way to adequately serve your markets for continuous satisfaction?

The responses were varied since there are different markets and customer needs also vary. 10 (9.5%) responded that their companies need to inform their customers in advance of stock outs and then when they should come. For they do run out-of-stock sometimes. 20 (19%) were of the opinion that an organization’s ability to serve customers in a reasonable period of time is very important. There is no need to let customers wait when they can be attended to immediately. Even during peak hours, additional hands can be brought on. 25 (23.75%) are of the view that needs do not remain constant. It is important to have suggestions boxes at the premises of enterprises to collect customers’ views on the premises of companies to solicit their views is important. 34 (28.5%) point out that some customers are ‘budget shoppers’ and so any price increase of items/services they render to their customers must be well communicated in advance to their customers. Newspapers or the radio can be used in this case. The reason for the price must also be given. Another 20 (19%) suggest that occasionally companies staff should have eye-to-eye contact with their customers to learn of their problems first hand. It is not enough to be ‘customer-centric: customers should be part of the customer-centricism’.

Do you periodically estimate your market share so as to know what to do in case your share is falling? 60 (57%) state that it is always difficult to estimate your market share. The best indicator is either a rise or fall in the number of your customers. It is urgent to find out what is wrong with your services/products and find ways to ameliorate it. 40 (38%) say if the overall business

climate is bad, then there is no need to worry, but if the business climate is good, and your customer size keeps on dwindling, then there is cause to worry. Best marketing practices must then be resorted to reverse the trend. Why it is not always easy for it certain additional costs, or least, promotional expenditure must be increased. A tiny minority 5 (4.75%) state they will resort to price undercutting and extend their working hours.

If your competitors increase their expenditure on promotion in order to attract more customers, will you immediately do same?

40 (38%) will not necessarily do same. They will only examine their promotional messages if they are not biting enough. If they are biting enough, they will stick to their initial or current messages. After all, what is the objective of promotion, is it not to create awareness and subsequent action? They will only react if the messages of their competitors are enough to cause their customers to defect or switch. 30 (28.5%) point out that, first and foremost, it is the duty of marketers to bring to the notice of their customers whatever they have for them. Promotion can be done on the quiet, it is not a matter of being flamboyant for all to know what you are doing. Making sure your promotion can cause or incite the market to buy is what is important. The competition must be studied and not copied anyhow. After all, they may carry similar and not the same product and their channels too may be different. 20 (19%) are of the opinion that coming out with a new promotional message is not very easy and so they will walk before they will leap. It is not an issue of unnecessarily joining the bandwagon. 15 (14.25%) state the situation will be carefully studied before taking any action. We need to cut our coat according to our size. No one promotional message fits all, competitors are promoting their products, their promotional messages may not be too different from what we have, but we shall try to mind our business, at the appropriate time, and if need be, we shall decide what to do to serve our own interests.

What do you think you should permanently do to ensure that your market keeps on growing or the size keeps on continuously to increase?

35 (33.25%) respond by saying that they are conscious of what they are to do to keep their customers satisfied for repeat business. Though it is not easy, but we shall try to prevent our customers from leaving us for the fact that they are not very satisfied with our products or services. 28 (26.7%) say periodically they will sit down with their customers and find out from them how they see the services or the products they are offering them. If our products meet their expectation, which areas do they find us below expectation? If they respond or answer, then we

shall work on that. We are to succumb to the expectations of our customers. 20 (19.04%) view customers as critical to the survival of their businesses and so will always engage or consult them in everything they do for them. Customers are their first reference point and are ever ready to sheepishly submit to them, for without them, where shall we be? 22 (20.9%) stress the urgency to periodically engage their customers and brainstorm on the way forward when it comes to products and services they render to them.

As an organisation, are you able to achieve your market forecast every year?

50 (47.6%) answered by saying they are able to achieve their market forecasts every year and even at times exceed their forecasts but not without difficulties. 35 (33.3%) respond by saying they are not able to achieve their market forecast for the year because of resource inadequacies. But since it is in their overall interest to be able to achieve their forecasts, they will try to surmount the odds and achieve it. 20 (19%) say they don't prepare or put in place a market forecast to be achieved later. They set targets for every three months and try to achieve those targets for the business year.

Marketing cannot go solo, do you get the necessary cooperation from other functional corporate players?

75 (71.4%) respond by saying they do get the support, whether technical or financial from other functional corporate players, but they always insist on justification for whatever we ask for. As marketers, we know what should go into the "custom" component of our products, but the engineers and the production staff always insist on standards and costs of production. We are at times asked to tone down our request, but we are also competing with others and we needn't compromise on standards. The engineers talk of "quality control regimen" to be met and the marketers respond by saying 100% quality is always very expensive, and this puts marketing at a disadvantage. 30 (28.5%) say it is 50-50. At times they get the support, at times they are told to wait and may not get at all. This at times results in a "verbal war", they think we are dictating what they should do. But we are very close to the customers and know exactly what they want. We pray for 100% cooperation for overall organizational harmony.

Is market research conducted very often?

55 (52.4%) use market research a lot. We cannot do away with it. To us market researchers are very useful. The market does not stay same and it is appropriate and fitting we do or conduct

market researches regularly so as to be in 'tune' with the dynamics of the market. 30 (28.5%) do not formally conduct market researches they rely a lot on their agents and distributors who are very close to their customers and do whatever they tell them to do. They also rely on past experiences and judgment of situations to do what they are to do. 20 (19%) say they are yet to come to term with marketing research. All they need to do is to produce. Their dealers and distributors are around to buy.

What techniques do you use to whip up demand especially in the 'off season' of demand for your products?

30 (28.4%) state they do not experience any 'off season' and so do not whip up demand. 35 (33.3%) experience 'off season' in January and August of every year and therefore conduct reduction sales as a sales strategy to increase their customer traffic. They revert to original prices after the 'off season' is over. 40 (38%) do not experience 'peak' or 'off season' business period and get steady sales. They don't use any extra ordinary strategy in their marketing. What they do, is to always do what their customers expect them to do in order to maintain or retain them.

How often do you scan the competition to find out whether you are at par or below par with your competitors?

72 (35.5%) periodically scan the competition by doing window shopping and 'eavesdropping' and also watching the advertisements of their competitors and listening to their commercials on radio. They also watch their social philanthropic activities and also watch their new product launches. These enable them to adjust or adapt their marketing. Scanning the competition cannot be left to chance. 28 (26.67%) do not scan the competition often for they do not have strong competitors. 5 (4.74%) don't see scanning the competition as very important. If it becomes important in the future, they will do it. But for now, it is not.

What marketing strategy do you perceive you can use to outwit your competitors?

25 (23.9%) say by making their products available in every sizeable market where it is profitable to do business. 28 (26.7%) are of the view that they need performing brands and above average when it comes to product or service quality. One hotel say by giving memorabilia and souvenirs to first-time visitors and also by being extremely hospitable to all guests for they to sell the hospitality facility to others. 40 (38%) are of the view that properly advertising your products to

your target markets is what they will use. Minutely explaining what your product can do, when and how to use it and then also having a toll free line for all customers to call and make inquiries. 12 (4.4%) will use broad make coverage with the employment of foot soldiers and sales canvasses to do door-to-door marketing.

In implementing marketing strategies, what difficulties are encountered both in-house and out-house?

According to 32 (20.47%) of the respondents marketing strategy implementation is difficult. There is the need to plan the implementation and give out deadlines, targets, outcomes and assign responsibilities and also benchmarks and standards. Market dynamics and shifts in the marketing environment are also there to contend with. It is not always the case that the budget requested will be got. You get or you don't get all the budget requested for. Staffing is also a problem, there are some who have not been properly groomed for the job and they must be given adequate orientation and training to be able to cope with the work. Marketing strategy implementation is a new road to travel on 35 (33.3%) of the sample point to the fact that it takes a while to implement a strategy but executives are always on your neck for results and even at times the targets set are not even realistic. It takes a lot of resources to fully implement a strategy and you don't get all at a go! This is obviously a setback. 38 (36.2%) in their view to effectively implement a marketing strategy, relevant and accurate information is needed on your markets and even your competitors, but these do not come in handy, they come in fits and starts, and this affects effective implementation of strategy. No two marketing situations are the same – the camaraderie, the resources, the spirit the will power to succeed and others may be different or non-existent. But these are essential ingredients for full implementation of marketing strategy.

How often are Marketing Audits done on the organization's marketing department?

8 (7.62%) have been conducting marketing audits and the rest 97 (92.38%) do not conduct marketing audits. Marketing Audit is not a practice that is part of the marketing culture of the greater majority of the respondents.

What do you do to retain valuable customers and even draw others who are not even your customers?

60 (57.14%) of the sample see customer retention as a cardinal objective. Their business is to create and keep them for long-term business. What is practically doable must be done to keep

customers. At the end of the day, it is the company that benefits. 25 (23.8%) will do what in the opinion of customers is good for them. They will seek the opinion of customers and do whatever they tell them. After all, they are there for them. It is they, which they are to serve and serve them very well. It is their wish that they tell others the good things they have done for them for they to come and do business with their companies. The motto is that: if our services please you, then tell others so that they too will come. 20 (19.04%) see pleasing customers as an expensive undertaking, but they will nonetheless do it. Some customers go to extremes, but they will have to succumb to their wishes.

How do you prospect for customers?

The responses vary by product or service. The banking sector 8 (7.61%) use the mass media vehicles to appeal to the market. The use of newspapers is very paramount. Radio is also used and they spell out their services and products to the market. Pharmaceutical retailing 5 (4.8%) their target is the health care delivery service sector and they appeal to those who run hospitals and clinics, especially, the off-shelf drugs. Newspaper adverts are used the most. Telecommunication companies 3 (2.8%) take the market by storm and through aggressive publicity launch their services with accompanying charges. This is normally done nationwide to inform the market they are around. They also sponsor television and radio programmes. Hospitality and Tourists destination sites 7 (6.7%) use giant billboards, radio stations, television and newspapers to prospect for customers. Where they think their location or sites are not very conspicuous for patrons to easily locate them, they put up more than one notice to lead visitors to where they are located. Stickers, banners, leaflets, and posters are thoroughly used. International magazines are also used to attract foreigners. Catalog and persuasive advertisements in newspapers are not left out. Savings and loans companies, 5 (4.8%) have contracted radio stations and their commercials and broadcast daily in which the market is told of what awaits them if they come to their premises. They have good offerings for them and their savings are also safe with them. Bookshops, 4 (3.8%) aside giant notices, also use the newspaper as a medium to advertise what classes of textbooks they have on offer and who is to visit for one or new purchases. They also announce their attractive prices and generous discounts for buyers of their books. Micro Finance Institutions, 3 (2.8%) use field sales forces to canvass for customers especially at markets and lorry stations where they run into itinerant sellers and hawkers who

daily visit the lorry stations for business. Body and Personal care Distributors, 4 (3.8%) by virtue of their products, sponsor radio programmes and their products are announced on radio and at the same time radio jingles are also used. Insurance companies, 6 (5.6%) of the sample have commissioned agents who do the prospecting for them, especially life insurance policy. Manufacturing companies in the sample 12 (11.2%) have been in business for some time and they prospect for customers through radio and newspaper advertisements. They also undertake some philanthropic activities and again sponsor societal events like festivals and inter-school athletics meetings. Furniture shops, building materials shops, aluminium kitchen ware companies and wood and veneer processing, 22 (20.92%), apart from newspaper and radio advertisements, sponsor programmes on television and also use billboards and posters. They also engage the services of advertising agents to produce catalog advertisements for them. Fruit juice processing and Agro-processing machines fabrication shops, 8 (7.6%) visit farmers who are into farm produce processing and introduce cassava grating machines and fruit juice extractors and also partake in industrial trade fairs and exhibitions to display what they have in stock for farmers. They also donate yearly towards National Farmers Day in December of every year starting from 1986. Petrol and Gas Filling stations 5 (4.8%) use the airwaves and use giant billboards at their sites of operation to draw the attention of motorists and gas users. How their premises are properly landscaped with concrete and bitumen is a plus for all buyers. Interior Designers and Decorators, Used Electronics Appliances shops, outlets for used vehicles, bar soap manufacturing company and Printing presses constituting 12 (11.4%) use canvassers and locating strategically to attract the market.

How do you gauge or infer that customers are satisfied with your products?

30 (28%) say it is by repeat purchase of the product. If it is not good, they will not repeat to buy. They will not even ask of it again. 24 (22.4%) are of the view that if they positively say something about the product and again convince neighbours to buy, then they are satisfied. 25 (24.05%) are of the opinion that, if at one instance a consumer buys more than one item of a product, then they are satisfied with the product. Why are they buying more than one? At least, they should wait until what they have bought gets finished, and then come back again; but this is not the case. 26 (24.28%) suggest if buyers buy and then decide to buy some for friends or relations, then they are satisfied with the product.

If consumers pass negative comments on your products' quality, what do you do?

60 (57.12%) take negative criticism of their products' quality in good faith and do whatever it is expedient to do. At times, we do hold a meeting to consider the negative criticism and plan the way forward. We also extensively go into the criticism. What exactly is the problem or the defect, and how can it be ameliorated for customers to buy it again? What really went wrong? Who was at fault? Was it a technical problem? Could we have done better? A lot of self searching is done to point out or isolate the problem and then tackle it with all seriousness. Such criticism can put a company in the negative limelight and at the same time repel a lot of customers. 40 (38%) say they are there because of their customers and so will zealously conduct an in-house investigation into the particular product's batch and then exactly find out what really happened. This must be tackled with all seriousness and despatch. It can give the company a negative or bad image and so should be taken as a serious matter. 5 (4.8%) if possible, will do a 'product recall' to prevent further damage. If in the recall nothing damaging is found, we shall see what to do next.

Do you always get the support you need from other functional players since marketing cannot go solo?

27 (29.3%) reply that they see themselves as working to achieve a common objective and so they get the required support especially on product design. Their inputs are taken in good faith and it is for the overall benefit of all. 42 (40%) say it is difficult getting the cooperation at times. At times, it is really difficult because production and pronouncement do not give in to us very easily. They always talk of standard raw materials and standard products, but we in marketing talk on 'custom' components. More often, we have to go all out for an amicable settlement. 18 (14.27%) say they always labelled as giving in to customers. We are always reprimanded for giving in too cheaply to customers. 'You don't have to over pamper them. We are in business and profits matter, for without them, where shall we be? Those who complain of high prices for our products, should try somewhere else. We are in business to make good business.' Another 18 (14.27%) reply they get reasonable cooperation and support. It is their wish the cooperation and support increase. But we do our best to appease them, so that in future we shall also get tacit support from them.

How often do you collaborate with production/engineering department to be able to meet customers' orders?

50 (47.61%) ascribe to themselves as being in the frontline for the company. They hate a situation where they will have to disappoint customers. Immediately the orders come, they notify production/engineering immediately, and then the time the order must be fulfilled. We are very mindful of the competition. For us, reliability and promptness when it comes to order fulfilment are our hallmarks. There is that continuous collaboration to be able to meet all orders no matter the size. 30 (28.57%) do not only collaborate but continuously engage the production/engineering, they don't come out with the product, those in production do, and so it is imperative we always communicate and interact to avoid disappointing customers. 25 (23.8%) state they are not the producers of the products the companies market, what is needed of them is that they do tell production/engineering if the demand they have to meet and so they often collaborate.

How do you ensure that sales go very well for your organization?

36 (34.28%) see sales as very important, otherwise the entire organization will grind to a halt. They see their sales forces as troops on the field who see to it that their sales go on as expected. They give the needed stimulus for sales to continuously increase for they to ask for more production where necessary, we do make the necessary interventions. 27 (25.71%) are of the opinion if sales don't move up continuously, they will be in trouble. A lot of questions will be asked and so they are always monitoring sales to see to it there are no hiccups. Where there are hiccups, they render the necessary help. 21 (20%) say that if as marketers, we do not work well, sales will not go very well. And so we don't have to disappoint the entire organization with disappointing sales performance. Poor sales is a very bad result for marketing and so they don't go to sleep.

What distribution strategy is in place to ensure that your markets are reasonably and adequately served with your products?

40 (38%) have used local distributors to make their products available to customers. It has not been very easy getting local distributors with the necessary financial connections and linkages. What is hampering our distribution is poor road network. The roads are not networked! Warehousing facilities is another problem. But we are doing the little we can to make our products available to customers. 32 (30.48%) use retailers in the big towns and cities and their performances are always monitored. At least, we ensure that they stick to the recommended price

to avoid mass defection by customers. 15 (14.28%) use supermarkets to make their products available to customers. The only disadvantage according to them is that, the supermarkets are in the cities and the retailers buy and then resell to these customers. This puts on unnecessary margins and then increases the prices of our products. The problem must be addressed, as we cannot engage in direct marketing of new products. 18 (17.15%) engage the services of dealers and distributors scattered all over the country. The snag is that they stock the products of other producers or companies and this respectively affects the sales performances of our products. The long term solution is to get sole distributors for our products and it will not come easy.

In your view, is your product line commensurate with the size of the company in which you work? If not, what do you suggest?

50 (47.61%) see their product line as adequate and there must be maintained and 55 (52.4%) are of the view it is inadequate and suggest a product line extension only it must be done carefully as they need to watch the competition first.

Are the prices of your products reasonable in your estimation?

45 (42.85%) consider their prices to be reasonable, based on prevailing economic conditions, 50 (47.61%) don't consider their prices to be reasonable, in their view, it is the market that has set the price for them. Left to them alone, they wire there is an upward adjustment, but they don't want to incur the wrath of the competition and so will go with it. 10 (9.52%) whether reasonable or not, they are not a force to contend with, and so they will go with it.

How often, and how do you promote your products or services to the market for acquisition?

40 (36.0%) regularly promote their products and the radio is the main medium of promotion. 50 (47.61%) always promote and both radio and television are used. 25 (23.8%) engage the services of advertising agencies to create promotional messages for them and these are inserted into newspapers and then on giant billboards.

Generally, how do you fertilize your markets for good growth of your markets?

52 (49.52%) say they try to let customers have value for their money. We need to deliver quality products and this will create repeat customers who we need for our permanent stay in the business. Good quality comes at a cost and we are very mindful of that. This means we need to do away with unnecessary costs in our production efforts. 40 (38%) fertilize their markets by doing everything possible to satisfy its heterogeneous markets. They don't see it as easy, but they

must do their best in that regard. It is not easy appeasing or satisfying customers, in all their eccentricities and mannerisms. But do, they must. 13 (12.38%) estimate the preferences of the market and then try to meet them. Only the preferences don't stay same for long and we appreciate that.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Majority of respondents are of the view that it is their duty to see to the continuous growth of their markets to ensure the continuous survival of their companies. As to the best way to serve their customers, they are of the view that it is through having a listening ear and doing exactly what they say. Estimating a company's share of the market is important and finding ways to reverse a decline in the share of the company's market. If the general economic condition is not good and your share falls, then there is no cause to worry, but if it is good, then there is cause to worry. If it is expedient to increase promotional expenditure to whip up demand for their products, they will do so but it is important they do so after a very careful study, not just by following the bandwagon.

For a company's market to keep on growing, it is urgent to make their customers satisfied with their products and services. Customers should be prevented from leaving the services of the organization. Having repeat business with all customers is mandatory. On achieving market forecasts, majority are able to achieve it, but not without difficulties. Some contend with competitors who import the same product they have manufactured locally, but still, they are able to hold them. Collaboration and support from other functional players are received, but are at times asked to tone down requests from production/engineering and also not to expect them to compromise standards as standards are crucial for business success. Market research is done regularly to be in 'tune' with the market. During 'off season or peak' periods, demand is whipped up by price reduction or organization of sales contests and raffles to boost sales. This is normally after X'masin January and after the cocoa season every year. Competition is scanned by 'window shopping' and eavesdropping conversations of competitors. They observe new product launches and also advertisements of competitors.

Outwitting competitors is by offering quality products and delivering first-class customer service to customers. Creative and persuasive advertisements are also used and the use of customer toll-free lines to register complaints on their products. Being at the beck and call of customers is the

secret. On implementation of marketing strategies, the difficulties encountered have been listed to include lack of thorough planning, inadequate marketing budget, setting of unrealistic targets, benchmarks and standards are also hard to achieve. Marketing audits are not on the agenda of the sample we can only conjecture it is not a typical Ghanaian marketing culture. To certain customers, the organizations go all out to do whatever is practicable to let them stay. The business of marketing is to create customers and keep them (Drucker, 1954). Pleasing customers and retaining them, is an expensive undertaking, but companies must do that. A lot of techniques are used by companies in the sample to prospect for customers. Among them are: the use of mass media vehicles to appeal to the market, the use of newspaper advertisements in either black or coloured paint, publicity campaigns, countrywide launches of products, the use of giant billboards, radio stations through programmes sponsorships, field sales forces, visits to companies premises and offices to lobby for customers, commissioned agents, exhibition and trade fairs, donation to charity and benevolent programmes and projects, street walks with themes and conscientising the market about the product they have for them all.

Companies estimate customers' preference for their products through repeat, continuous purchase of their products. Again, saying positive things about their products and also recommending the products to friends and relatives are all indications that their products are well liked by the market. When customers say any negative remark about their products, an in-house investigation is done on the negative publicity or event. Marketing management does get support and collaboration from other functional players, but at times, it is until after much talk and persuasion. It does not come easy. Marketing wishes it gets more collaboration and support and not after much persuasion for marketing always means well. Marketing always collaborates with production/engineering to meet orders placed in by customers. Marketing provides a lot of inputs to the order fulfilment process. It is mandatory for marketing to ensure that sales moves on very well and therefore marketing is always monitoring the sales team ensure that sales is on the upbeat. Unnecessarily or large inventories can lead to the collapse of the organization. To ensure that products are widely available and accessible to consumers, local distributors are used and they avoid the use of unnecessary middlemen in the distribution chain as they put on extra margins leading to an upshot in prices. The hitch is that roads in Ghana are not networked enough to lead to a covering in the costs of distribution and the infrastructure is also a problem. There are not enough private warehouses for distribution. Minority are of the view that product line is inadequately commensurate with the size of their companies and majority say it is

adequate. The prices of their products in their opinion are reasonable, but of economic conditions are unfavourable, they will inch up prices to meet the rise in the cost of production. Mass media communication vehicles have been the media for promotion of products and markets fertilization generally is through letting customers have value for money.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To a very great extent, the survival of companies depends on how their markets patronise their products or services. These markets cannot be allowed to remain static. They are to grow to commensurate with the size of the firm or company. Marketing management has a “heavy herculean” role to play in the growth of companies markets. It is a duty they cannot shirk. But they need the support of all functional players in the company. Marketing cannot assure ‘we can do all’ for all. It is a symbiotic relationship and existence. Marketing need to always court the support of other players for success. Organizations’ successes hinge heavily on how fast or slow their markets expand or grow. The market is scalable and expendable, but there must be facilitators for that with the appropriate mechanisms and techniques to ensure the expansion and the up scaling.

## **CONCLUSION**

Marketing management cannot be slighted when it comes to overall organizational successes. It sees to it that the products or services of the organization get marketed and that these markets also grow for the betterment of the organization. If products or services don’t move in the market, it is marketing that will have to be the sacrificial lamb. That when there is spectacular success when it comes to the marketing the products or services, marketing gets the kudos. But it cannot take the kudos alone. It is a team effort, and the entire team must enjoy.

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