Application of Modern Methods of Advertising and its Suitability in Iraq

Ghayth Ali Jarad
write2ghayth@gmail.com

Abstract

The advent of the internet technology has brought a lot of revolution in the way business is done. Advertising is not left out in the reality of this destructive innovation. New method of advertising makes it possible to specifically target potential customers of some products at close range. Online users are educated and sophisticated audience, an advert that will make sense to them has to be one that is rich in content. The content is expected to be genuine and one that can be related with easily. Meeting up with these challenges calls for innovative research work and the discard of old systems and tools. Cultural barriers in the Middle East countries like Iraq may make a typical advert that is acceptable in the Western world not to be effective in Iraq. The study discusses the peculiarities of Iraq business environment and how advertisers can take advantage of it.

Keywords: Modern, Advertising, Marketing, Social Media, Business, Brands

Introduction

Advertising has always been an important marketing tool for organizations to reach the market. When print and electronic media became an integral part of a man's life, advertising logically plays a crucial role in the success of new products. There is always a tough competition to get the lion's share in the market, so better advertising strategies improves the chances of success. Successful advertising campaign testifies that customers are kings, and once they love the product, it will necessarily become a brand. Creative advertising created for consumer products from soft drinks, to shampoos or luxury cars can create a world of differences in the future prospects of the product company. The magic of successful advertising campaigns is the thinking that products simply do not remain ordinary items; they advance to become brands in the eyes of consumers. Brands are becoming popular among the masses, and you can hear people singing jingles or reading successful advertising campaigns. This qualitative study, takes a look into the forms of innovative advertisement and their applications in Iraq.

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Any discussion on the role of new media in consumer decisions is clearly complex. This is because it is difficult to track consumer communication. Media planners in advertising have long recognized that different media have different strengths and weaknesses and are good for different purposes (Sissors and Bumba, 1990). The new advertising platform for the media is similar to the traditional advertising system in many ways (Valceanu, 2012). Market research is key, from it the marketing team are able to deduce the audience that should be reached as well as their needs and preferences for the advertisement to enhance sales and garner profit for the organization. It also gives a clue on how the competitors can be edged in the market. Market research can be done through a market research team within an organization or outsourced. Market research can come either as primary research in which information are collected directly from the respondents or secondary where information are collected from other organizations that have previously collected the information for other purposes.

The Economic Potential of New Media Advertisement

Revenues from online advertising peaked in the third quarter of 2012, with revenues of $9.26 billion, an increase of 18% compared to previous years. By the end of 2017, an online report shows that revenue from digital advertising was in excess of $85bn. This growth includes social networking sites such as Facebook.com, Twitter.com, and personal blogs and feeds the continued growth of digital advertising. Facebook, the most popular social networking site, is also the most visited website on the Internet, which has overtaken both Google.com and MySpace.com in 2010. Revenues from advertising on Facebook grew by 35.9% from 2011 to 2012 and surpassed expectations for growth in 2013. Figure 1 shows that quarterly revenue from advertisement has generally been growing progressively from year 1996 to 2017.
Figure 1. Quarterly revenue growth trends 1996-2017 ($ Billions)

Source: techcrunch.com

Facebook.com delivered $6.99 billion in revenue for advertising in 2013, increasing total revenue by 55% from the previous year. A significant part of the popularity of Facebook.com and the growth of new accounts were obtained from the parent consumers, which as of February 2010 amounted to 36 million Facebook.com users. A more conservative number was estimated in 2012 in the eMarketer study with 28 million moms using social networks, and approximately 82% of these users of the social networks of the mother have children under the age of 18. Mothers check Facebook more often than other users during a 24-hour period of time, and are more inclined to use wireless devices to access Facebook content (Bohan, 2010; Lipsman, 2010; Moms and Media, 2012; eMarketer, 2012; Edwards, 2014).

Advertising can be configured to target a specific audience like gender. This can come in the form of using adverts in pink colour to target the women folk. Advertising in websites that are women friendly or sites that promotes things that pertains to women can also be very successful. Research shows that over 80% of purchases generally are made by women; this includes consumer purchases from household items to health care. Women spend 3.26 hours per day on average compared to men at 2.75 for time spent with Internet media. It’s thus important for manufacturers to understand women preferences, and fashion their goods to with the aim of satisfying them (Bailey, 2005; Banyte, et al., 2007; Williams, 2010; Costa, 2010; Belch and Belch, 2011; "Media Comparisons Study", 2012). What seem like a divergent view is the opinion of A 2010 RAMA study which shows that online advertising have similar influence on both genders, but that male
internet users are more likely to be influenced by internet advertising, instant messaging and blogs.

The understanding of consumer needs, allow marketers to effectively fashion their tools to a target market. Digital advertising techniques are relatively new in comparison to the traditional methods of advertising; the introduction and dissemination of the Internet and digital devices are on the increase in the use of digital advertising by marketers (Talafuse et al., 2012)

**Forms of Advertisement**

There various methods that can be employed to execute advertisement otherwise known as “advertising techniques”. The traditional forms of advertising used for ages includes: Newspaper advertising where adverts of different sizes are placed in print media, we also have TV Advertising which has always been the most powerful form of advertising, as most time the audience are forced to listen to adverts sandwiched in a running program, news and other TV features. Radio advert was also wisely used. Bill boards advertisement have also been around for a long time, and it’s also still making impacts in major cities and commercial centers. No one can resist the impact of a colourful bill boards in strategic places where people drive by or passes by. The modern forms of advertisement are generally electronic based. Some of the forms of modern methods of advertisement are discussed below:

A major distinction between the traditional marketing technique and the modern technique also known as new media is that traditional marketing focuses on information about consumer orientation and tactics of mass marketing, while digital or electronic marketing uses information derived from data, collection methods are from actual consumer purchases which provides an understanding of consumer behavior. The digital nature of the data provides a significant understanding almost instantly compared to other methods of marketing research used in traditional channels. These data are collected over a period of time and are capable of recording several transactions between the consumer and the brand to provide a relationship image as compared to the image of only one transaction.

Transaction theory has evolved into an exchange theory that is oriented towards feedback from consumers and a preference for relationships developed as a result of past and future experiences and interactions between the consumer and the brand, as well as the buyer's intentions that the consumer has in the future (Mulhern, 2009; Malhotra, 2010). These views are also shared by Lefaix-Durand et al (2009) and Romaniuk et al
(2010) which sees the traditional system as transaction theory of consumer marketing which is planned on advertising messages and mass-marketing system of communication which takes the advantage of demographic information for a market segment. While the modern system is relational exchange theory of marketing which is a shift away from the traditional one way transaction theory of consumer marketing. The traditional system of marketing can however not be neglected as they are necessary to gain recognition and for brand awareness, it also provides the basis for the modern internet base form of advertisement (Pfeiffer and Zinnbauer, 2010).

**New media Advertisement**

The internet is currently the most important source of information for educated people around the world, it thus provide a good base for advertiser to reach out to potential customers all over the world. As of April 2018, there are over 4 billion active internet users in the world of which 3.3 billion have social media account. Most of these users are in Asia with 48.7% as of December 2017. The middle east has a partnering percentage at 3.9%, see Figure 2. Zenith Online, an advertising measurement company predicts that ad spending will rise by about 5 percent, which will reach about $579 billion at the end of year 2018 (Molla, 2008). This is a medium widely used for advertisement. Communication generally has gone digital with the use of mobile electronic devices. Advertising in sponsored links of major search engines has become one of the most effective ways of online advertising.

![Internet Users in the World by Regions - December 31, 2017](source: Internet World Stats - www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm)

Figure 2. Internet users in the world by Regions-December 31, 2017
Internet reach has become so huge that everyone in any part of the world can view the advertising of their products. In addition, if you have a website, you can use search engine optimization methods in which your site will be in the top 10 search engine results. Internet advertising is a fast growing area of research, the research also analysis content areas that were not initially considered as advertising. Getting the first rankings helps you get a wider audience, which in turn can lead to increased sales. Other forms of advertising include pay per click advertising and email advertising, which can also be tested. Popular social media sites like Facebook, You Tube, Twitter etc also allow sponsored adverts that can be targeted to a particular audience.

One of the results of the increase in advertising campaigns on the Internet was the rapid development of alternative forms of delivery and less distinct differences between advertising, other forms of brand promotion and information dissemination, as well as other types of information about the brand and products. For example, we traditionally think of advertising as paid messages appearing on some medium or in a place that can attract a large number of consumers (for example, billboards on the highway or posters on buses). The Internet contains some forms of advertising that correspond to this description. However, on the Internet, advertisers also have their own home pages. Here they can sell products, provide information about their products and offer consumers additional benefits. This begins to blur the role of advertising and other marketing functions. Other sites may sell several brands, similar to brick and mortar stores. Such sites can provide information about many brands or provide brand reviews.

It is not always clear whether such information is independent, or a form of paid promotion of a specific brand. Again, the clarity between advertising and independent information on the Internet is becoming less clear. This led to a growing need to better determine what is considered advertising, and to reconsider many assumptions about how advertising works. Internet users have control over their impact on advertising messages; this comes in their freedom to change a page or simply shut down their browser. The ability to measure Brand Exposure Duration BXD has a very positive impact on advertised companies that are trying to spread their brand identity and protect a powerful brand. Advertisers and advertised parties discover websites and certain positions on these sites that maximally meet the width, frequency and BXD conditions. Advertisers will also be able to increase or decrease, depending on BXD, and depending on the position where the banners are placed each time and the number of impressions (Faber, 2004). The following are the forms of new media advertising.

Advertiseement through Mail: Mails can be used to connect a wide range of potential customers. Email addresses of prospective customers can be searched from directories, and public data base where such customers have indicated interest in the
goods been advertised, a substitute good or a complimentary goods. The mail advert should be short, usually not more than half a page. Though it’s advisable that such mail should be colourful to command attention, but the graphics should be light such that it can be easy to open the mails.

Banner advertisement: Banner advert can be placed on a company websites, newspaper platforms and other blogs that have such provisions at a price. When advertising banner ads are placed on a particular website, a click on the ad directly takes you to the site of the advertised product. This means that you managed to save time in the store to buy the advertised product. Moreover, a banner ad is certainly more attractive than a regular print ad, because you can add a lot of graphics and animations to it to make it attractive and visually appealing. However, the location of the ad is limited to one place. There are, of course, examples of banner advertising, where graphics and animation are simply exaggerated.

The graphic images are usually about 468 x 60 pixels which are displayed on an HTML as ad. They are usually displayed in the form a rectangular-shaped box at the top side of the website page or at the bottom. Banner ads leads in all forms of new media advertising, they represent 32 percent of all new media advertising revenue. The smaller the file size, the faster it is loaded. Advertising banner designers pay much attention to image sizes, since slow loading can make viewers impatient and change their location on the Internet before the banner is fully downloaded (Dabner, 2004).

When a customer clicks on a banner ad, it is directed to the website of the product that was advertised. Banner advertising is based on the concept of pay per click. This gives revenue for publishing a website every time there is a click on an advertisement, since the customer has been sent to the advertiser's site. This is regardless of whether this click on an ad is converted into a sale, it does not matter. The publishing site will be provided with a payment based on the common indicators of banner advertising. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of the advertising banner will be determined for the advertising site only when the click becomes a sale.

If the web surfer does not click on ads, the banner tries to make sure that the image is registered and that the web surfer will sometime in the future, visit the website directly. The effectiveness of banner advertising is measured by the number of clicks on the ad, the number of visitors that were sent to the site of the advertiser, and the number of clicks on the page views. This gives them an accurate idea of whether the visitor was sent by an advertising banner or some other medium. This indicator varies only by 0.1% and is rarely higher. Finally, it is calculated whether a visit to the website was through an
advertisement for sale. This gives real effectiveness of the effectiveness of banner advertising

The following are the types of banner ads (Dimitriadis and Baltas, 2003):

- Animated banners which include motion and rotation graphics. They can easily attract user's attention in a more effective way than static banners, not significantly affecting the file size or download time.
- Interactive banners, this support bidirectional communication with users who can add data, select from the menu, answer a question or even execute a transaction.
- Transactional banners form a significant development. This type of advertising combines advertising and sales, and consumers use impulse and unplanned purchases, allowing direct transactions without moving users to the supplier's website.
- Advertising banners contain links that, when clicked, redirect visitors to the advertiser's site. There are two types of banner ads: a keyword banner and a random banner.
- Keyword banners appear when the search engine is used to search using a keyword. This is an effective tool for companies that want to limit their target group.
- Random banners appear randomly. Companies that want to launch their new products (such as a movie or CD) use random banners.

Banners are placed by advertisers on third websites that address their target group.

Though the effectiveness of banner advert is usually judged through the click rate, but the banners are also effective unchecked communicating message in the same way as physical traditional bill boards. Suggestions for the enhancement of banner ads can be seen in the performance of ad size and motion increase, the use of large animated banner, banner ad with a pull down menu which gives additional information, ad message can also be personalized, this can increase the likelihood of customers to click. The use of keyword-activated banner “smart banner” that appears when a prospective customer search for relevant key word is also very effective, as it enhances the effectiveness of ads by displaying them at the sight of consumer interest and needs. Banner adverts should be structured to target customers’ attention with relevant information and also able to serve as a reminder for brands of goods that are frequently purchased (Shamp, 1999; Li et al., 1999; Dou, 2001; Brown, 2002).
Challenges with new media advertisement

The greatest challenge identified by Digital brand lab is the frequent changes that occur in the industry coupled with the rapid development of the digital world. There are also changes in trends and norms which occur rather rapidly. Only in the Middle East, the trans-bounder flow of data linking the Middle East to the world has increased more than 150 times over the past decade. Some countries in the region, have more than 100% of smartphone penetration rate and more than 70% of adoption of social networks, this is even higher than in the United States. In addition, marketers now are struggling to keep up with the algorithms of social giants Facebook, Google and Instagram. Strengthening how the feed works has led to companies investing more dollars to assess their value, or to look at other options, such as marketing influences. Another trend that affects marketers is security. More and more vulnerabilities marketers need to create their own protocols and protect digital environments to protect themselves and their customers.

There is also the challenge of content. Online users are educated and sophisticated audience, an advert that will make sense to them has to be one that is rich in content. In the past customer are Ok with adverts that answer the question of What alone, but now they also want to know “How” and “why”. Online adverts, though expected to be concise are expected to answer these questions in the most appealing way. The content even in its flamboyance and colour is expected to be genuine and one that can be related with. Meeting up with the challenges calls for innovative research work and the discard of old systems and tools, this brings in another challenge which is budget, an essential component of all innovative projects. Cultural barrier in a middle east country like Iraq may make a typical advert that is acceptable in the Western world to be unacceptable in the country. Thus necessary care has to be taken to ensure that the content of the advert is acceptable.

At the base line of these challenges is technical expertise challenge especially with the use of chat-bots and Artificial Intelligence (AI) which are making exciting impacts in the world of advertisement. The educational background and work experience that would have been sufficient in the field of traditional advertisement may no longer suffix as advertisement becomes more technical and also requires specialized knowledge in the field of IT. New developments in new media advert are the use of “touchable videos”. This enables viewers of a video to buy what they sees a persons wears just by a click on the video. The mechanism to make this work and manage its outcome requires a lot of creativity.

1 Digital Agency company buzzeff.tv
Digital Media Services (DMS) a digital media outlet that has over 120 million unique subscribers and serves more than 3.2 billion ads per month sees the biggest challenge facing the communication industry to be privacy. In response to this, e-privacy regulation is to be effected in EU countries, since online communications are linked worldwide, it’s also expected that such regulation will spread to the Middle East.

Application of new media advertisement in Iraq

Culture has a profound influence on international marketing. It influences how an effective marketing can be passed across in a cross cultural setting. Beside, tariffs, currency exchange control, and language differences, culture has also been identified as one of the barriers that can be an inhabitant for a firm to flourish in international market. Thus approaching marketing techniques from a cultural background can prove to be effective, hence the needs to study the cultures in international markets in which online advertisement are to be targeted (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012; Varey, 2002; Moisander and Valtonen, 2006). Studies also shows that firms are keen to avoid the consequences that may be a fallout in lack of sufficient acknowledgement of culture in carrying out global marketing and advertising (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010).

Recent researches shows that there has been adaptation of branding and advertising to suit the culture of consumers, the Hofstede culture model has been particularly very useful in this regards (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2010). The draw back in the influence of culture in promoting the effectiveness on international advertisement can be seen in the role that different national culture has in the implementation of international promotion as different media has different applications over international markets, different types of promotion mix also applies to different countries. (Stone and McCall, 2004). There is also the problem of standardization, whether for efficiency reason or for effective adaptation (Moisander and valtonen, 2006)
Figure 3 shows Hofstede cultural dimensions. Using this figure to analyze the cultural dimension in Iraq and how this could impact on online marketing, “on power distance” there still exist the problem of inequality, the problem of terrorism and civil crisis only compound this problem as it makes a few individual that are the custodian of the state apparatus to be more powerful especially by the support they get from foreign governments. This problem deepens the division in the country, reduces the feeling of nationality as such online advert may need to be more domesticated to groups that shares common ideology in different parts of the country. On long time orientation, unfortunately the political crisis in the country especially as regards foreign influence and uncertainty of the future may not make Iraq score high on this point. This is however not a big problem as regards new media advertisement, since the adverts are usually planned on a short time frame.

Iraq been an Islamic country, has a low record on gender disparity. Generally in Muslim societies, the religion has always supported the rigid and masculine elements, which are subjected to severe punishment for any bad behavior. Obviously, in Islamic societies, Islam shares different roles for men and women, and this affects the separation of power, the attribution of responsibility to women, and differences in obtaining between both sexes (Hofstede, et al., 2010; Hassan, 2015). All these discriminations against women not withstanding, the women are still the people that makes decisions on
household items to be purchased and they are also the people to go out for shopping. As analyzed above, adverts targeted towards the females in the society are bound to be more effective. Since women in Islamic cultures spend more time at home, it shows that they have the potentials to be more exposed to internet content. Thus new media advert could actually be very effective in Iraq, especially if they are made attractive for the female internet users.

Studies on Iraqi culture shows that they value collectivism, they organize themselves in groups and prefer to choose group over individualism, their loyalty is also to group on which they depend for assistance. The minority groups in Iraq like the Kurdish society also shares same attribute. They also organize themselves into different groups based on political divisions, dialects and other forms of ideologies. The kurd is known to be high context in communication; there is a popular saying among them- “say it to the wall so you will understand”. Generally Iraqis rely on referrals for their social and economic engagement (De Mooij and Hofstede, 2011; Geringer and Minor, 2012; Hassan, 2015 ). As regards uncertainty avoidance, Iraqis have passed through difficult times in the past and came out strong, they should score high on this point, as the people must have developed a high level of tolerance in the event of uncertainty. Thus new media advertisement can be planned for a long time, even if there is interruption in the course of execution, it is certain that the designed model can still find application in the future.

Culture should be seen to be dynamic, as it changes over time. Changes in the economy and political setting and other form of social changes can have a profound influence on cultural values and cause changes. Increase in national wealth as a result of positive changes in the economy can lead to changes in values as there will be more expenditure on education and media which can lead to the development of the democratic institutions (Mooij, 2011; Hamza, 2015).

Conclusion

New methods of advertising popularly called new media as expressed in different forms on the internet like emails, banner ads on website, YouTube advert etc have proven to be effective form of advert placement. The positive trend in the revenue received from online advert placement from 1996 to date proved that companies have recognized the profound benefit in the use of the internet for advertisement. The use of the internet for advertisement will also continue to progress as internet penetration increases. Unlike the traditional form of advertisement that is more general in inform,
new media advertising needs to be specially formulated both in content and forms of placement for it to reach the target audience and for effectiveness.

It’s established that the influence of culture on the effectiveness of advertisement also applies to online advertising. Iraq as an Islamic country, as well as a country that recently recovered from political and social crisis has her peculiarities. Content of online adverts targeted to this country is expected to conform to the religion tenets and also made appealing to the educated class of the society who are more frequent on the internet. Generally, it can be concluded that online advert that tilt towards the appreciation of women are bound to be more successful, as it was reported that decisions to make purchases and even the making of these purchases are usually executed by women.

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