Effects of Electronic Media Advertising on Rural Banking in Ghana: A Study of Unity Rural Bank Limited, Ho Ghana

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Abstract

Advertising which uses electronic energy to transmit information to the end user is called electronic media advertising. It appears as TV, radio, internet. The objective of this study is to establish the contribution of electronic media advertising to rural banking in Ghana. Hitherto, studies have covered advertising rural banks; the outcome of this study will help reveal contributions of electronic media ads to rural banking. Questionnaires were administered to 350 rural bank customers in Ho Municipality. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. It was found that radio advertising is the main tool adopted by Unity Rural Bank and this has influenced many customers to the bank. Thus, it’s important that the bank air radio ads often to improve patronage. The study shows that traders constitute an important market of rural banks; traders should be major target and create ads to attract them.

Keywords: Advertising, rural banks, ho municipality, electronic media, Ghana

Introduction

Rural banks were created to provide banking and micro financial services to rural areas and small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). According to Asiedu-Mante (2011), the absence of institutional credit undoubtedly created a huge problem for rural dwellers. It manifested in the form of low acreages under cultivation, poor farm maintenance practices, inadequate or no fertilizer application, as well as generally poor agronomic and animal husbandry practices. Asiedu-Mante (2011) argues that the irony of the situation is that rural Ghana abounds in wealth. It was quite evident that if the economic activities in the rural areas of the Ghana were to be enhanced and sustained, then some kind of institutional arrangement had to be put in place to address the problem of inadequate credit.

To do this, the Bank of Ghana carried out a study into the rural credit problem in Ghana in 1971 to ascertain why rural
dwellers/operators could not avail themselves to institutional credit from the existing banks that had rural branches and agencies. Two very interesting revelations came out. First, it was found out that the traditional banks’ insistence on security was a major stumbling block to the rural dwellers. Second, the traditional banks insisted on borrowers operating current accounts (Asiedu-Mante, 2011). Several suggestions were made; one of which was the establishment of rural banks. This was what led to the establishment of Nyarkrom Rural Bank, the first rural bank in Ghana in 1976.

As at January 2013 the total number of rural and community banks in Ghana stood at 137 out of which 12 are in the Volta Region (http://www.bog.gov.gh/index-30/07/13).

These number of rural and community banks in the Volta Region notwithstanding, barely very little is known about their operations even within their catchment areas. This is because little or no attention is paid to promotional practices such as advertising by these banks. Indeed, the lack of effective advertisements and exposure has resulted in poor visibility and low awareness as regards the existence, uniqueness, and services of rural banks in the Volta Region and the entirety of Ghana by extension. Arguably, the most revolutionary form of advertising today is electronic media advertising which employs mediums such as radio, television, and the internet. It is against this backdrop that this study focuses on the objective facts related to the subject of electronic media ads with an attempt made to present information that rural banks can use when making customer communication media choices.

In the past decades, rural banks were found everywhere especially in the rural settings in the country where other commercial banks had no interest to venture into. In the present era however, due to growth and competition in the banking industry, these banks (commercial banks) have decided to penetrate the rural areas which used to be the domain of the rural banks.

Also the number of rural banks has increased. These developments pose a big challenge of competitiveness, profitability, and growth to the rural banking sector. There is therefore the need for rural banks to deploy new technologies like the use of electronic media to enhance the dissemination of customer information, customer education and persuasion since such customer communication technology appears to contribute greatly to competitiveness. It is based on this assertion that this study is intended to investigate the extent to which electronic media helps in informing, educating, and persuading prospective and existing customers about the operations of Rural Banks in Ghana.

The concept of Rural Banking is 37 years old in Ghana. However, very little is known about this all-important rural finance intervention. One of the causes of these eventual obscure operations by rural banks is their poor customer communications practices such as the non-use of electronic
advertising. Hitherto, most studies have been relatively general on the issue of advertising rural banks. However, the outcome of this study will help bring out the focal contribution of electronic media advertisements to customer information, education, and persuasion in relation to rural banking in Ghana.

This study was intended to establish the contribution of electronic media advertising towards the promotion of rural banks’ operations in Ghana, the case of Unity Rural Bank Ltd in the Ho Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana.

**Literature review**

Rural banking is popular for very small towns and people who live far away from areas of larger population and cannot make the drive to these locations whenever they need to use banking services. Rural banking is a common practice in places where banking institutions are fewer and far between and people who need to carry out banking transactions may have difficulties finding a way to do so.

Rural banking in Ghana takes its origin from the early 1970’s. Prior to that period, the main operators in the rural financial market comprised branches of commercial banks, credit unions as well as other entities in the informal sector such as money lenders, traders and ‘susu collectors’. Friends and relations are also important sources of rural finance (Asiedu-Mante, 2011). In the middle of the 1970s, the Central Bank of Ghana identified some structural rigidities prevailing in the countryside due to the low level of financial intermediation as compared to the situations at the urban centers. The banking penetration ratio in Ghana is currently low by international standards compared to what the situation was in the 1970s due to the strong urban bias. For example, even though the Greater Accra Region of Ghana represents only 13% of the country’s population, it commands 35% of the total national commercial bank concentration (Buchs and Mathisen, 2005). Even at the urban centers, most of the potential micro-finance clients are not able to access the services of commercial banks because their conditions are outside the means and capacity of the poor. The rural banking concept was thus introduced to bridge the rural urban gap of financial management (Andah and Steel, 2003). Rural banks are expected to operate within catchment areas with high illiteracy rates. As rural development institutions which require effective local participation, rural banks are to be owned and managed by stakeholders in the poor communities within which they operate. Once established, they were given the basic responsibility of providing banking services to the rural community folks – people with low incomes (Morawczynski and Pickens, 2009; Gautam and Pickens, 2006). These include services such as deposits mobilization and granting of loans and other credit facilities to qualified rural folks especially those in agri-businesses, petty trading and small scale manufacturing. Consequently, rural banks have been at the forefront of designing innovative products
and modifying their operations to suit the specific needs of rural farmers, the underserved, micro-enterprises, and other low income operatives of the rural economy, since their formation (Bank of Ghana, 2013). With the initial rural bank established in 1976, the number has increased to about 137 actively operating, with more than 460 branches nationwide (despite in recent times, however, the major commercial banks have extended their activities to target markets reserved for the rural banks, thereby giving them profound competition (Nair and Fissha, 2010). Unlike the commercial banks, the rural banks lag behind with regards to the use of technology, especially computers and networking. To date, most of their processes are undertaken manually thereby reducing their competitive edge in the banking industry. For them to be able to compete, they will need to improve their services by improving upon their technical infrastructures and human resources.

According to Asiedu-Mante (2011), a lot has been achieved by rural banks since the first one was established in 1976. Some of these achievements are.

- Success in playing a major role in inculcating banking habit in the rural folk of Ghana.
- Huge sums of money in the form of deposits have been mobilized by rural banks over the years without which these funds would have been in the custody of individuals and/or perhaps could have been misallocated or unutilized.

- Credit to central government; about one-third of rural banks’ deposits are invested in government securities in compliance with Bank of Ghana’s directive.
- Credit to rural dwellers; the bulk of the mobilized funds in rural banks are given out as loans and advances to agriculture sector activities and rural industries.
- Facilitation of cocoa purchases; rural banks have been actively involved in the purchase of ‘Akuafo (farmers) Cheques’ to alleviate cocoa farmers of some of their domestic marketing problems.
- Support to rural development; as development oriented institutions, rural banks have provided financial support to a number of development projects (such as health centers, borehole water supply, educational institutions, markets, and community centers) in some rural areas.
- Needs of women; some rural banks have designed special schemes for women most of whom are engaged in micro-business activities.
- Job creation; rural banks have provided employment for a sizeable number of people, both professionals and clerks.

According to Farese et al. (1997), advertisement is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of idea, goods or service by an identify sponsor. It involves the mass media, such as television, radio, internet and electronic billboard.
Business realizes the tremendous potential of this form of promotion and advertising has become increasingly important in rural banking. The objective of advertisement includes the following.

- It helps to introduce new products and services to specific target market.
- It helps to position the firm's brand or market mix, by informing and persuading target customers about the benefit.
- It helps to obtain desirable outlet and tell customers where they can buy a product.
- It provides ongoing contact with target customer even when a sale is not person available.
- It prepares the way for sales person by presenting the company’s and the merits of the product and service.

The list below summarizes some of the many jobs that advertisement can do;

- It can overcome prejudices
- Gives useful information
- Raise awareness of a company or brand
- Reinforce existing behavior
- Change perception
- Get the brand on to the candidate list
- Increase frequency use

It is evident from the above that, ads can perform many different roles. So it’s vitally important that rural banks understands the precise objective for the campaign (Hart, 1995).

In the famous book “Understanding Media: The Extension of Man”, McLuhan et al. (2003) discussed the impact they expect (networked) electronic media to have on the world. Since then the emergence of a 'global village' has become a universally accepted idea. In line with McLuhan et al., it is argued that 'dialogue', or information exchange, through networked media will have to play a role of increasing importance in development, with dialogues having 'horizontal' and 'vertical' dimensions. With these dimensions, networked media facilitates rural networking and social change. Radio is by far the most widely used mass electronic medium in rural regions of developing countries, primarily because of its versatility which allows for its use in various types of communication efforts (Mowlana and Wilson, 1990). The presence of local radio stations and the availability of small transistor radios allow for 'easy and affordable access’ in relatively large geographical areas. The extent to which local radio stations operate as independent broadcasters largely depends on the socio-political and economic context of a country, which also determines the way radio stations are allowed to be used (Heeks and Bhatnagar, 1999). Forms of advertising media that will be discussed include the following.

**Television**

Morgan and Stoltman (2002) talks about the effectiveness of traditional media channels mostly use by advertisers. They prove that, what people usually expect television ads is generally effective. Morgan and Stoltman
(2002) conducted a controlled experiment with undergraduate students trying to assess the effectiveness of television ads in promotion. The outcome of their experience shows that viewers are likely to perceive and interpret certain information about ads.

In addition, television adverts will disclose more information to the viewers. This advert that is informing consumers will actually increase their awareness. Prime time for networks and television is between 7 P.M and 11 P.M while millions of viewers are watching. A widely used new form of television advertising is the infomercial. Infomercial advertising is actually 30 minutes commercial. They promote the product of the advertiser using a talk show type setting. Viewers can order the advertised product or service by calling phone number or writing to an address (Farese et al., 1997). In this research we will assess the impact of transmitting informative advertising through TV adverts. This will enable us to confirm or refuse the findings from the paper.

Radio
It is estimated that radio reaches 96% of people in a given week. This ability to reach a wide audience makes radio an extremely effective advertisement medium (Farese et al., 1997). The best time for radio advertising are in the morning when people are driving to work, during the afternoon or early evening when they are returning back from work to home. They are called prime time for radio advertising because advertisers are guaranteed a more concentrated audience. Radio advertising is presented in 15-, 30-, 60-seconds time slot. The messages are effective in encouraging people to buy because the announcer or actor along with background music, jingle, slogan, and or sound effect adds excitement, drama, or humor. Radio ads are interested in reaching target customers at reasonable expenses while ensuring that the station is compatible with the advertised brand image and the creative message strategy. In using the radio ads, certain concentration should be taken such as the choice of geographic area to cover, the choice of day part and the station format (Shimp, 1996). In using radio advertising, it has the ability to reach segmented audiences. That is an expensive variety of radio programming enable advertisers to pick specific format and station to be optimally compatible with both the composition of it target market or audience. Radio ads also have the ability to reach prospective customers’ on a personal and intimate level. The message comes across as if they were personally speaking to each audience member (Shimp, 1997). The nature of radio listening will cause campaign to maximize frequency and not coverage. This is beneficiary to advertisers as conventional wisdom believes that consumer require more exposure to radio (Hart, 1995).

Internet
The internet refers to as a cyberspace or the information. Superhighway is a huge worldwide network of interconnected
computer that permit the electronic transfer of information. The internet website is often described as electronic yellow page. Interactive ads on the net will not supplant the traditional ads media, but advertisers and their now have revolutionary new medium of reaching present users of their brand and prospective customers (Shimp, 1997). Before the internet, the thrust of media relation work was pushing information from the organization to the desk of the media reporters, producers and editors via news release, news tips and press kit. That’s all change because the internet let the reporter and piece together companies information’s from the corporate website without ever going through the public relation office of an organization or agency. Toth, Van Leuven (2004). The internet holds many exciting prospects for marketers to assist in marketing applications, from marketing communication and research to relationship marketing with customer’s and other stake holders. It is the marketing communication tool that we are most concern off. The internet is a computer network or, more accurately, a collection of inter-related network which span the globe and which allows users with the appropriate hardware and software to communicate to each others. Formally it was created for government, government agencies, universities and libraries to use until 1991 when a ban on it was lifted for it is use as a commercial purpose. Many organizations’ are still trying to come to grips with the new technology. Importantly, the internet is no respect of size of organization. The opportunities it affords are opened equally to small and large organizations alike. There are no high cost of entry to preclude all but the market leaders so all organizations’ can take advantage. Indeed, some have suggested that it “levels the field of play” so that it is easier for smaller companies or even individuals to compete with large operators (Pickton and Broderick 2005).

Advertising is more than just the sketches we observed on television. Advertising makes use of mass media which have traditionally included press, TV, cinema, posters and radio. Nowadays, it can also be said to make use of video releases and, significantly, direct mail which is increasingly being recognized as a mass medium too, given the number of people that can be reached through the mail. Many people confuse the meaning of advertising. It is distinguished from other forms of marketing communications activity. Often it is used as a term to describe a wide range of different promotions well beyond the remit of advertising (Pickton and Broderick, 2005). Some benefits of advertising according to Fill (2002) include.

- The ability to reach number across different geographic market when required.
- More effective targeting and media allow large audience to be reached with specific messages.
- Depending on the media type used, cost of reaching individuals can be lowered compared to other forms of marketing communication elements.
Advertising can provide information for the client at different purchasing stages.

- Effectiveness and awareness creation at early stages at new product launch.
- Wide range of media vehicles available to carry advertising

It is likely that advertising will serve a number of purposes in terms of communication with both individual and organizational clients. Advertising is used to meet number of specific marketing and promotional objectives, but its main emphasis is to inform, persuade and remind customers to purchase products and services. One of the significant roles for advertising particularly in respect to its ability to reach large number of clients and customers, often very quickly, is that of creating awareness. This can apply to new product launch where there is a need to create initial awareness and positioning and also to establish brands where messages regarding re-positioning might be main objective (Hughes et al., 2008).

Pickton and Broderick (2005) argue that Kotler, in previous works has also identified that advertising as effective with the use of the mass media. It is however important to carefully consider the types of mass media by an organization in advertising its operations. This will help ensure that advertisements conform to the standard definition of the term “advertising”. One such definition is that of Crosier (1999). He defines advertising as communication via a recognizable advertisement placed in a definable advertising medium, guaranteeing delivery of an unmodified message to a specified audience in return for an agreed rate for the space or time used. According to Doyle and Stern (2006), the following factors are to be considered in the choice of an electronic media for advertising.

- defining the target audience, thus the particular group you are tailoring your advert message to
- defining the responsibility of the advert, which is the work you actually want the work to do in campaigning
- setting the advertising budgets that are how much money to spend on the campaign if the firm can afford only a small expenditure on advertising, costly media such as television would be ruled out

Doyle and Stern (2006) continue their argument by indicating that each of the different broad types of electronic media- TV, radio, internet, etc. has characteristics that influence its cover frequently and impact. Three criteria affecting the choice of electronic media are:

- Target market: if the product is aimed at a narrow segment, such as architects, broad-beam media such as television and newspaper are very wasteful.
- Product: if a product is bought largely on a rational ground, the advertisement is often more effectively place in a newspaper or magazine. The internet is effective if customers are likely to engage in
extensive search for the best value. Television is good for products on emotive grounds where image of pleasure, status, and style can be exploited.

- Message: television is outstanding both for impact and for the presentation of emotional messages. It offers greater creative scope than other media.

**Methodology**

The target population for the study comprised customers and employees of Unity Rural Bank Limited in Ho, Volta Region of Ghana. This population was chosen because these people either interact or work with the bank and could assist in finding solutions to research questions that were asked.

Ho is the regional capital of the Volta Region of the Republic of Ghana. The Volta Region lies at the eastern side of Ghana. The region is bounded on the east by the Republic of Togo and on the west by three other regions of Ghana namely the Greater-Accra Region, Eastern Region and the Brong-Ahafo Region. At the Northern border of the Volta Region is the Northern Region and at the south of the Volta Region is the Gulf of Guinea. The Ho Municipality has the highest concentration of Rural Banks in the Volta Region and for that matter there exist a lot of customers and employees of rural banks in the municipality.

The population size for the study is One Thousand Seven Hundred and Sixty-Four (1764) which is made up of customers of Unity Rural Bank Ltd, Ho. Multistage sampling method was used to select the respondents for the study. First, a total of Three Hundred and Fifty (350) respondents representing approximately 20% of customers of the bank were sampled purposively for the study. Purposive sampling method was also adopted in selecting the Branch Manager of Unity Rural Bank as a key informant to respond to interview schedule.

At the second stage, accidental sampling technique was used in the distribution of questionnaires to sample their opinions. In the use of accidental sampling, the respondents were selected on the basis of chance; respondents were sampled based on the probability of meeting them at the premises of the bank.

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the respondents and the Branch Manager of Unity Rural Bank in the Volta Region of Ghana. A questionnaire was administered to the customer respondents and an interview schedule was used to interview the Branch Manager. The first part of the customers’ questionnaire was used to collect data on the demographics of the respondents such as gender, age and type of customer. In the second part of the questionnaire, data collected included the impact of the electronic media. This included awareness and the influence of the various
types of electronic media ads the respondents.

An interview schedule was used to collect information from the Branch Manager on the various electronic ads of the bank. It also covered the purpose and target audience of the bank’s electronic advertisements. Finally, the effect of the electronic ads on the patronage of the bank in the study area was also determined through the interview schedule.

Data gathered were checked for clarity, organized and analyzed in line with the research objectives. The analysis of data was done by SPSS version 16 software to produce descriptive statistics in the form of frequency tables.

### Results and discussions

The study was conducted among customers of Unity Rural Bank in the Ho Municipality of the Volta Region of Ghana.

#### Table 1: Gender and age categorization of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>60.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (Years)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-25</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 35</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Field data, 2013

Most of the respondents sampled were male (60%) whereas the majority of the bank’s customers are people between the ages of 26 and 35 years (36%). This is an indication that a large segment of the male population in rural Ghana understands the concept of banking. An analysis of the age distribution also indicates that a large proportion of the bank’s customers are young adults in their early working ages.

#### Types of occupation of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traders</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office Workers</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contractors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study revealed that the majority of the bank’s customers are trader (56.3%), followed by farmers 29.4%. This is a classic explanation of the caliber of customers the bank deals with. Indeed it a confirmation of the fact that the majority of rural folks in Ghana are either trading or farming which are the predominant occupations in rural Ghana. Office worker are the third with 10.9% and these include people in the formal employment sectors such as teachers, clerks, security agents, and other white color job holders.

### Types of account held by customers

As many as 123 customers (35.1%) indicated they were Dunenyo account holders. Dunenyo is a micro-savings “susu” product of the bank designed for traders and other daily income earners who wish to make a daily saving of as low as GH₵ 5.00p daily. This product is aimed at encouraging rural savings with any little amount (table 3).

### Table 3: Customer account classification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savings</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>33.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunenyo</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data, 2013

Dunenyo is trailed by the regular savings account holders who constitute 33.4% of the bank’s customers. Current account holders (27.7%) are mainly customers who either draw salaries on the bank or other elite customers who appreciate the formal banking system to some extent table 3).

### Medium of awareness creation about the bank

The study considered the means by which customers first became awareness about the existence of the bank. The responses to this are indicated in table 4 below.

### Table 4: Mode of awareness creation by unity rural bank ltd

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Media</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales force</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News Paper(s)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advertising usually has three major purposes which are to inform, educate, and create awareness. The study revealed that in the case of Unity Rural Bank Ltd, the premium vehicle for the achievement of these objectives is via the use of the electronic media which scored 63.4% (table 2) and includes radio, television, and the internet. This is followed by the use of the bank’s sales force (22.6%) which is typically below-the-line promotion. It was also revealed that the bank on some occasions has also publicized its activities via news papers (10% per table 4). This according to respondents is usually done when the bank posts notices in the major news papers about its Annual General Meetings (AGMs). Other media of awareness creation by the bank include billboards, posters, handbills, etc. which forms only 4% on table 4.

### Specific medium for advertising the bank

The research paid particular attention to the most effective electronic medium that is usually employed by the bank and preferred by customers in advertising.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Effective and customer preferred advertising medium</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medium</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data, 2013

The results as revealed on table 5 indicates that radio ads are in the lead with 67.7%, followed by television ads 27.4%, with the least being the internet 4.9%. Respondents explained that their preference of radio ads is because all communities in the municipality have access to a radio network due to the proliferation of radio stations in the municipality lately. Television scored 27.4 percent because most respondents said they were not privy to much TV ads about the bank. A cursory analysis of the findings revealed that internet ads are least with only 4.9% response rate because most rural folk in Ghana either do not have access to internet facilities or are not users of it.

### Frequency of electronic media advertisements

The study found out the perception of customers about the regularity of electronic media ads by rural banks with reference to Unity Rural Bank Ltd. Table 6 refers:
Table 6: Regularity of electronic media advertisements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Incidence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost always</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once in a long while</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data, 2013

The study indicates that 62% of the bank’s customers only watched or heard of the bank’s electronic media ads occasionally. They explained that these are usually when the bank introduces a new product or service, when the bank wants to make a special announcement such as inviting shareholders for an AGM, or when they are calling on debtors and/or loan defaulters to honor their obligations. The results also revealed that 20% of customers heard or watched the bank’s electronic ads almost always whereas 18% heard or watched once in a long while. These responses are, however, relative because it depends on how often the sampled customers were exposed to a particular electronic medium.

The effect of electronic media ads on unity rural bank

According to the Branch Manager, electronic media ads of the bank were aired as per a schedule of the bank due to the huge expenditure involved in such ads. He hinted that radio ads were regular at an interval of at least two times a week on Volta Premier Radio (a local frequency modulation station that covers the entire Ho Municipality). This he said explains why the bank spends 60% of its annual promotional budget on radio ads which he disclosed has yielded a lot of dividends since most customers in the bank’s catchment areas listen to this radio station. The Branch Manager revealed that the ads on this radio network were aired at prime time. He explained that the bank does few TV and internet ads because they are very expensive and yielded little results (as per the bank’s internal assessment). This corroborates the information provided by customer respondents on tables 5 and 6.

Reasons why the bank uses electronic media

Further interviews with the Branch Manager revealed that the bank relied mainly on electronic ads for four main purposes. These in an order of importance are to sustain favorable publicity, to gain more market exposure, to attract customer attention, desire, and action, and to increase sales volume.

Conclusions

The electronic media adopted by the bank for advertising includes radio, television, and internet. These media has influenced most respondents to buy into the operations of the bank by attracting their attention, informing, and persuading them to do business with the bank.
The study shows that most customers of the bank (63.4%) got to know about the existence of the bank through electronic media ads. Also, 67.7% of customers are of the view that radio ads were more educative, informative, and persuasive compared to other advertising media used by the bank. Thus, radio ads have a significant influence on their rural banking decisions. The study also revealed that electronic media ads were carried out as a competitive strategy to promote the bank and increase its market share and exposure against competitors.

In addition, it also helped to gain favorable publicity which has led to strengthening customer loyalty, and has also resulted in increasing the customer base of the bank consistently. It is therefore clear that electronic media ads have momentous effect on customers of the bank. Therefore, for the bank to enhance it performance, there is the need to regularly inform, educate and persuade target and existing customers with more creative electronic media ads especially radio advertisements.

References


