



**INFLUENCE OF E-MARKETING ON PERFORMANCE OF THE FRUIT  
PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN KENYA: A CASE OF DELMONTE KENYA LIMITED**

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**Abstract**

More people are relying on sources they trust such as e-marketing than trusting commercially driven institutions such as news broadcasting agencies and advertisers. Hence, being truthful and genuine on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Twitter can help a business build a huge base of loyal customers. This study aimed at establishing the effect of e-marketing marketing on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya. The study was guided by four objectives. The study established that social networks influenced organizational performance to a great extent. The study also found out that technology influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent. Further the study established that promotional campaign influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent. The study also found out that customer collaboration influenced the performance the organization to a great extent. The study concluded that social networks influenced organizational performance to a great extent. The study also concluded that technology influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent. Further the study concluded that promotional campaign influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent. The study also concluded that customer collaboration influenced the performance the organization to a great extent. Based on the findings the study recommends that organizations should create social networks, in the form of online brand communities, with customers as members which will allow them to interact with the customers and help in the exchange of information thereby allowing them to get a valuable feedback regarding their products and merchandise. The study also recommends that organizations adopt e-marketing to generate innovations and translate them into actionable ideas with the aid of their customers. The study also recommends that organizations should adopt e-marketing so as to increase the collaboration and learning from customers in various ways, for instance by novel social ways of providing and receiving feedback from new products and concepts.

**Keywords:** *e-marketing, social network, technology, promotional campaigns*

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background information

E-marketing is the combination of various internet tools that enable users to generate, exchange and modify content continuously (Munuera, 2011). Weber (2006) in his book, *marketing to the social web*, posits that the marketer's primary job is to be the aggregator of customers and potential customers. The marketer's secondary job now and in the future is to create compelling environments that attract people. Some people still believe that e-marketing is a fad, a bubble that will burst as suddenly and dramatically as the first Internet bubble did. In Latin America, Lux (2009) expresses that e-marketing isn't about money or institutions. It isn't about stockholders making billions of dollars. It isn't about corporate ownership. E-marketing is about ordinary people taking control of the world around them and finding creative new ways to bring their collective voices together to get what they want. Whether people like it or not, it is the world to which institutions must adapt. And this is only the barest inkling of what will happen when a new generation of digitally empowered kids joins the workforce. Sure, there will be fluctuations in the market and new-media ventures will come and go. That's a natural cycle of any growth industry. But it's clear that people will never go back to the day when marketers had to funnel messages through a few media monoliths. The stunning speed with which these changes are occurring has blindsided business marketers. Having spent decades refining tactics built around messages, they are now being told that the messages don't matter. They need to become Chief Conversation Officers (Lux, 2009).

In Kenya today, e-marketing has totally occupied a significant part of lives of both individuals and organizations, just like the rest of the world. The Twitter and Facebook community here in Kenya is always abuzz when it comes to news, local programs, tech conferences, games, business, politics among other things, and people's reactions to these will always be found as they happen (Betich, 2010). When one is in the process of doing something and wants honest feedback, one just has to do a quick search on twitter and it will be amazing how many responses comes within a short period of time. The most common e-marketing used in Kenya are: Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Foursquare, and YouTube. In Kenya, almost all business that deal with communicating with the consumers has e-marketing as an integral part be it marketing, branding, PR, customer service or any other function of a business that requires you to reach out, e-marketing plays a vital role (Betich, 2010).

Del Monte Kenya Limited is a Kenyan food processing company that operates in the cultivation, production, and canning of pineapple products. The company produces canned solid pineapple, juice concentrates, mill juice sugar and cattle feed (Omboi, 2011). Kenya's largest single manufactured export is canned pineapple, and the country ranks among the top five pineapple exporters in the world, both of which feats are direct results of the company's existence and operations. In the past, the company received negative publicity stemming from conflicts with workers and human rights groups, and the company has been targeted by human rights groups for hazardous conditions at the facility, poor living and working conditions for workers and for intimidating trade union groups. In 2001, the company took significant steps to address and correct matters per these concerns.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Technology has greatly affected the market place. The digital revolution of the market place has allowed much greater customization of products, services, and promotional messages than older marketing tools. Various studies have been done world over on how e-marketing transforms the way people live and do business (Qualman, 2012; Mangold, 2009; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010; Distaso and McCorkindale, 2011). Scholarly materials can be found on how e-marketing improves products and service through branding hence better service delivery (Burson-Marsteller, 2010), low cost investment, direct customer communication and brand awareness through e-marketing (Hailey, 2010) and effectiveness of e-marketing which can be measured by service resolutions, relative cost and productivity, call avoidance and the ratios of detractors converted to promoters (Grantham 2009), However, none of these scholars had looked at the influence of e-marketing on performance. It is on this basis that this study sought to establish the effect of e-marketing on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya with specific focus on Delmonte Kenya Limited. Additionally despite the positive achievements that had been achieved by e-marketing, there seemed to be limited information and guidance on e-marketing use.

## **3. Objectives of the Study**

### **General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to establish the influence of e-marketing on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya.

## **Specific Objectives**

- i. To establish the effect of social network on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya.
- ii. To evaluate the effect of technology on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya.
- iii. To establish the effect of promotional campaign on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya.
- iv. To examine the effect of customer collaboration on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya.

### **4. Justification of the Study**

The study will help managers in various organizations understand how they can use e-marketing to improve their marketing strategies. This will provide insights on how other companies can use e-marketing as a marketing tool in consumer marketing in the Kenyan market. The study will be quite enriching to marketers, researchers, academic institutions and scholars. It will add to their knowledge and enable them to be more informed when considering the use of e-marketing in the local markets. The study will also be helpful to Delmonte Kenya Limited and other players in the fruit processing Industry in carrying out e-marketing.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **5. Social Exchange Theory**

The study adopted the Social exchange theory which originated from sociology studies exploring exchange between individuals or small groups. According to Emerson (2013) it mainly uses a cost-benefit framework and comparison of alternatives to explain how human beings communicate with each other, how they form relationships and bonds, and how communities are formed through communication exchanges. Individuals engage in behaviors they find rewarding and avoid behaviors that are high in cost. In other words, all social behavior is based on each actor's subjective assessment of the cost benefit of contributing to a social exchange. The communication between actors is deemed to be ties, edges, links, or connections.

### **6. Social Marketing Theory**

The relationship between social marketing theory and profitability of business has been within for a long time now. As the name implies, is grounded in commercial marketing theory and

practice. However, given that the application of social marketing is predominantly in non-commercial sectors, social marketing practice draws on a range of related disciplines including sociology, psychology and other social welfare related activities. As it grows in acceptance, social marketing has continued to evolve. Currently it is a highly dynamic field with new emphases and perspectives emerging, particularly in relation to the role that social marketers can play in contributing to structural change (Doyle, 2000).

### **7. The Resource Based View Theory**

The Resource Based View theory was applied to understand the linkage between information technology and firm value. The theory maintains that resources that are valuable, rare and imitable can lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Bharadwaj, 2000). The Resource Based View is a theory which emphasizes the internal capabilities of the organization in formulating a certain strategy to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage in its markets and industries (Caldeira and Ward, 2003). In general, the RBV theory addresses the central issue of how superior performance can be attained, relative to other firms in the same market and posits that superior performance results from acquiring and exploiting unique resources of the firm (Caldeira and Ward, 2003). The theory argues that competitive advantage can be generated by the unique bunch of resources and capabilities that a business has. The resources can be thought of as inputs that enable an organization to carry out its activities which can either be tangible (physical, financial and human resources) or intangible (intellectual resources and reputation).

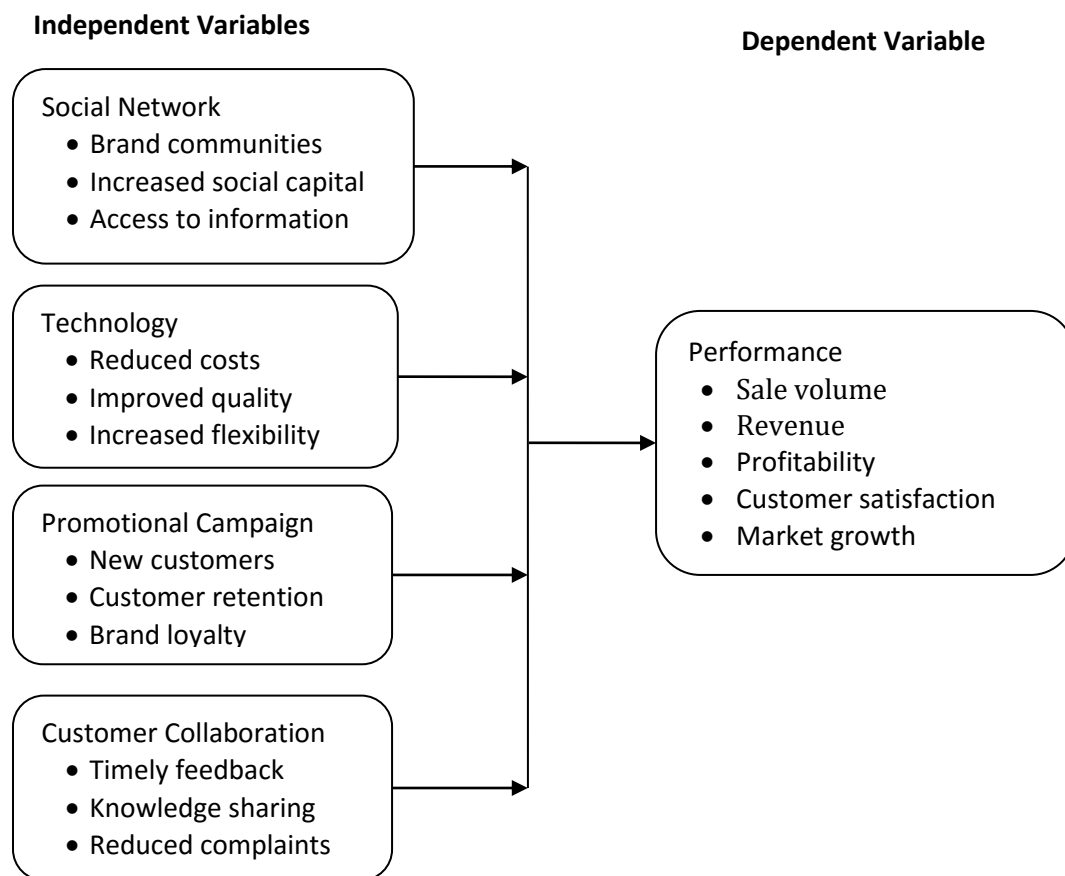
### **8. Research gap**

Studies reveal that e-marketing is increasingly becoming an integral part of organizations. Many organizations have come up with policies of enhancing their marketing strategies in the hope that the organization will achieve a certain level of growth and become competitive. However, with the high changing level of technology and the growth of mobile phone, much need to be done on how the new technology such as e-marketing can be adopted to enhance marketing across the industry. Influence of use of e-marketing in the fruit processing industry has not been well documented in the public and regulation and therefore lack clarity by many customers. As a result, the literature review looked into the role played by various factors influencing the use of e-marketing and how they relate to marketing in the fruit processing industry.

A detailed analysis of the influence of use of e-marketing and performance literature had been explored. However, many of the scholarly work on these issues and actually very few had given enough accounts on the core factors influencing the use of e-marketing on the organizational performance. There were various new ways of marketing as documented in various literatures; however less had been done on the influence of e-marketing in the fruit processing industry and how it affected the organizational performance within the industry. This study sought to help in filling the knowledge gap by providing insight into the influence of e-marketing on performance of the fruit processing industry.

### 9. Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a structure that tries to explain the relationship between variables in the study and shows the relationship by use of diagrams. It is a hypothesized model identifying the concepts under study and their relationship (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2008).



### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design. The study employed stratified random sampling technique in coming up with a sample size of 61 respondents which is 10% of the total 605 staff

targeted. Primary data was collected through the use of questionnaire. The main instrument for data collection was structured questionnaires that allowed for uniformity of responses to questions. To ensure reliability of the data, pilot testing was conducted using the questionnaire on 10 management staff. The study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was analyzed based on the content of the responses. That is, responses with common themes or patterns were grouped together into coherent categories. The outcomes of the research were then generalized to assess the influence of e-marketing on performance of the fruits-processing industries in Kenya.

## **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS**

### **10. Influence of Social Networks on Performance**

According to the findings, majority (86%) of the respondents indicated that the organization had established social networking through e-marketing while the rest (14%) indicated otherwise. This implies that the organization had established social networking through e-marketing. This is in line with Holsapple and Singh, (2001) who posits that in the wake of intense global and domestic competition, firms are increasingly turning to innovation to compete. Also, majority of the respondents (65%) agreed to a great extent that social networks influenced the performance of the organization, 22% agreed to a very great extent, while 11% and 2% indicated that social networks influenced the performance of the organization to a moderate extent and low extent. This implies that social networks influence organizational performance to a great extent.

### **11. Influence of Technology on Performance**

According to the findings most of the respondents agreed that; the rise of a new generation of information and communication technologies is used as a wave for fostering innovation and intellectual capital creation as evidenced by a mean score of 4.61, that the use of technology by Delmonte had led to improved customer satisfaction as shown by a mean score of 4.44 and that Delmonte had invested heavily on IT resulting to direct linkage between technology investment and increases in productivity and performance as evidenced by a mean score of 4.33. According to the findings majority of the respondents (68%) agreed that technology influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent, 20% to a very great extent, 10% to a moderate extent and 2% to a low extent. This implies that technology influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent.

## **12. Influence of Promotional Campaigns on Performance**

According to the findings in figure 4.10 majority (90%) indicated that e-marketing enhanced effectiveness of customer collaboration while 10% indicated otherwise. This implies that e-marketing is essential for the organization in its marketing. This is in line with Pepler & Solomou (2011) who posits that e-marketing can enable and significantly increase the collaboration and learning from customers in various ways, for instance by novel social ways of providing and receiving feedback from new products and concepts. Majority of the respondents (88%) agreed that customer collaboration influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent, 8% to a very great extent while the rest (4%) indicated to a moderate extent. This implies that customer collaboration influenced the performance of Delmonte Kenya Limited to a great extent.

According to the findings, majority of the respondents (84%) agreed that promotional campaign influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent, 10%, while the rest (6%) indicated to a moderate extent. This implies that promotional campaign influenced the performance of Delmonte Kenya Limited to a great extent. The finding differs with Frey & Rudloff (2010) who found out that Companies diligently establish Twitter feeds and branded Facebook pages, but few have a deep understanding of exactly how e-marketing interacts with consumers to expand product and brand recognition, drive sales and profitability, and engender loyalty.

## **13. Influence of Customer Collaboration on Performance**

According to the findings in figure 4.10 majority (90%) indicated that e-marketing enhanced effectiveness of customer collaboration while 10% indicated otherwise. This implies that e-marketing is essential for the organization in its marketing. Also, majority of the respondents (88%) agreed that customer collaboration influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent, 8% to a very great extent while the rest (4%) indicated to a moderate extent. This implies that customer collaboration influenced the performance of Delmonte Kenya Limited to a great extent. This finding agrees with Pepler & Solomou, (2011) who argued that proper use of e-marketing feedback can help improve the product offerings of an organization besides reducing future customer complaints hence increasing customer loyalty. Therefore, it is clear that customer collaboration influence the performance the organization to a great extent.



## **SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

### **14. Influence of Social Network on Organizational Performance**

The study established that the organization had established social networking through e-marketing. The study further found out that network competence and network location were the key to better innovation and performance in the organization and that through social networking the company had enhanced access to information and development of capabilities. Additionally the study established that e-marketing was used proactively to lead consumers toward long-term behavioral changes and that social network had assisted management in making strategic decisions towards achieving innovative products, technology and attaining competitive advantage. The study also found out that social networking had helped to influence customer loyalty in the company's services hence effective performance of the organization, that the organization had interacted with the customers and helped in the exchange of information thereby allowing the company to get valuable feedback regarding its products and that social networking had been used as a tool for creating criteria for performance in the organization.

### **15. Influence of Technology on Organizational Performance**

On technology the study established that the organization had adopted information technology in its operations and it was core in the company's operations and consequently in marketing. The study also established that the rise of a new generation of information and communication technologies was used as a wave for fostering innovation and intellectual capital creation, that the use of technology by the organization had led to improved customer satisfaction and that the organization had invested heavily on IT resulting to direct linkage between technology investment and increases in productivity and performance. The study also found out that technology influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent.

### **16. Influence of Promotional Campaigns on Organizational Performance**

The study also established that promotional campaign helped understanding of exactly how e-marketing interacts with consumers to expand product and brand recognition, drive sales and profitability and engender loyalty, that keeping customers engaged with e-marketing helped the organization to retain customers and also attract new ones, and that promotional campaign helped to identify exactly how, when, and where e-marketing influenced consumers hence helping executives to craft marketing strategies that took advantage of e-marketing's unique ability to engage with customers. Further the study established that promotional campaign influenced the performance of the organization to a great extent.

### **17. Influence of Customer Collaboration on Organizational Performance**

The study also established that e-marketing increased the collaboration and learning from customers by novel social ways of providing and receiving feedback from new products and concepts, that the company had taken full advantage of e-marketing due to its ability to provide novel possibilities for learning from customers and that social marketing had enhanced the efficient use of knowledge and information beyond the company borders which in turn results to effective organization performance. The study also found out that customer collaboration influenced the performance the organization to a great extent.

### **18. Conclusions of the Study**

Based on the findings the study concluded that the organization had established social networking through e-marketing. The study further concluded that network competence and network location were the key to better innovation and performance in the organization and that through social networking the company had enhanced access to information and development of capabilities. Additionally the study concluded that e-marketing was used proactively to lead consumers toward long-term behavioral changes and that social network had assisted management in making strategic decisions towards achieving innovative products, technology and attaining competitive advantage.

The study also concluded that the organization had adopted information technology in its operations and it was core in the company's operations and consequently in marketing. The study also concluded that the rise of a new generation of information and communication technologies was used as a wave for fostering innovation and intellectual capital creation, that the use of technology by the organization had led to improved customer satisfaction and that the organization had invested heavily on IT resulting to direct linkage between technology investment and increases in productivity and performance. The study further concluded that the organization used e-marketing as a promotional campaign tool.

The study also concluded that e-marketing enhanced effectiveness of customer collaboration. The study further concluded that adoption of e-marketing had enabled the company and customers to receive a real-world experience from products, as well as experiment with novel concepts, that e-marketing had provided a useful platform for inter-organizational co-creation and that proper use of e-marketing feedback had helped in improving the products besides reducing future customer complaints hence increasing customer loyalty. The study also concluded that e-marketing increased the collaboration and learning from customers by novel

social ways of providing and receiving feedback from new products and concepts, that the company had taken full advantage of e-marketing due to its ability to provide novel possibilities for learning from customers and that social marketing had enhanced the efficient use of knowledge and information beyond the company borders which in turn results to effective organization performance. The study also concluded that customer collaboration influenced the performance the organization to a great extent.

### **19. Recommendations of the Study**

Based on the findings the study recommends that organizations should create social networks, in the form of online brand communities, with customers as members which will allow them to interact with the customers and help in the exchange of information thereby allowing them to get a valuable feedback regarding their products and merchandise. The study further recommends that organizations use e-marketing proactively to lead consumers toward long-term behavioral changes. Management should also embrace social networking to assist them in making strategic decisions towards achieving innovative products, technology and attaining competitive advantage. The study also recommends that organizations invest in technology in order to benefit from reduced costs, improved quality, increased flexibility, improved customer satisfaction, higher productivity and ultimately, higher financial performance. The study also recommends that organizations adopt e-marketing to generate innovations and translate them into actionable ideas with the aid of their customers. The study further recommends that organizations should keep in touch and use new technology to enable human interactions on a high scope and scale

### **20. Areas for Further Study**

This study investigated on the influence of e-marketing on performance of the fruit processing industry in Kenya. The study suggests that further research to be done on challenges affecting adoption and use of e-marketing in organizations. The study also suggests further research be done on the influence of e-marketing on performance of the fruit processing industry by focusing on other fruit processing companies in the country other than that covered by this study in order to depict reliable information that illustrates the real situation in all fruit processing companies. Further study should also be done to find out how best organizations can utilize e-marketing in their endeavour to retaining their competitive advantage thereby improving on their performance.

### **21. Limitations of the Study**

There was anticipated difficulty in information disclosure from the respondents on the Delmonte Kenya Limited running process due to the management privacy. This was in regard to the

financial aspects and also on information sharing. The researcher however worked at winning the confidence of those involved in this research by giving them the reasons for the research and assuring them confidentiality. Another of the limitations of this study was in its scope. Since the study focused on Delmonte Kenya Limited alone, the results may not be applicable to other corporates. Thus, the recommendation for application was limited to Delmonte Kenya Limited.

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