COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING VISIBILITY IN BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY.

BY

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN MASS COMMUNICATION STUDIES AT THE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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DECLARATION

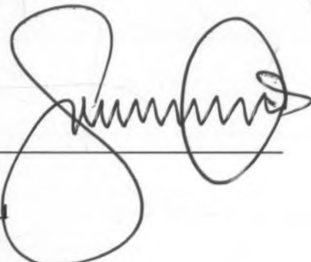This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of degree in any other university.

Signature _____ Date: 20|11|12

Mutuura Lydia Karauki

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This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my dear parents, and brothers for their support and encouragement

throughout the study period. God bless them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My appreciation and gratitude is to all those who in one way or another enabled me to complete this study.

Special thanks go to my supervisor, Mr. Sam Kamau for his tireless efforts and sacrifices to ensure that the project has been done to acceptable standards.

I am also grateful to my fellow colleagues and managers at IAT for assisting me to access information in more simplified manner, and my friends for their invaluable support and encouragement throughout the entire study period.

Last but not least, to my parents, Mr and Mrs William Mutuura and my brothers, Moses, Felix, Francis and Anthony together with their families, without whose support and sacrifice I could not have progressed this far. May God bless them.

ABBREVIATION

SMS – Short message Service

IAT- Institute of Advanced technology

RAF- Recommend A Friend

ICT- Information Communication Technology

BMW - Bavarian Motor Works

HSMAI -Hospital Sales and Marketing Association International

US –United States

TV - Television

GPS - Global Positioning System

VOD – Voice –on- Demand

PC – Personal Computer

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the communication strategies that the Institute of Advanced technology uses to enhance visibility, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies.

The objectives of the study were to identify the activities that Institute of Advanced Technology engages in, in order to enhance visibility, to examine the role played by various departments within the organization to enhance visibility, to investigate how the organization is using modern technologies to communicate to their targeted customers, and to investigate the effectiveness of these strategies on the target groups

The target population for this study consisted of IAT students, customer care, management and the teaching staffs in the organization. Simple random sampling was used to draw respondents from the population, where 55 respondents were drawn. The researcher also used primary sources to collect data. This consisted of questionnaires comprising of both open-ended and close-ended questions, and interviews.

From the study the researcher found that the strategies commonly used are word of mouth, Daily Newspaper, school presentations, open days, websites and social media as well as other literature such as bronchures and magazines. Of all the strategies, the most effective strategy is word of mouth followed by the Daily newspaper advert. With regard to visibility, though IAT has done a lot to make itself visible, more can be done using other strategies such as television, roadshows and radio advertising.

Also, use of social media and webpages to enhance visibility has not been very effective due the fact that the only social media site that is used is Facebook which is dependent on friends

invitation and therefore one can only access IAT from the site if he or she is a friend to an IAT member, while not many people are aware of the website.

As part of recommendations, there is need for the organization to device new communication strategies that are not used so as to verify whether they would bring in more results. In addition, the already existing strategies that are working for the organization can be improved for better results. There also is need to consider improving on internet marketing especially the use social media more since most of target group are on social media on daily bases. The marketing department can consider creating groups on Facebook to include other people since Facebook groups are not limited to friend's invitations.Finally, awareness about the existing webpages should be created since most of the target population is widely using the internet on daily bases and yet they are not aware about it.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Today's business environment presents marketers with an increasingly complex set of circumstances - global competition, impact of new technologies, and constant rapid change, forcing them to reinvent themselves and their corporate behavior to become flexible, more innovative and more responsive to the marketplace.

Competition is one of the main challenges facing business organization. This is due to the fact that products offered by one organization are likely to be offered by so many other businesses. In order to make it in the competition, the businesses make effort to have a plan of action that will make them edge in the market, so as to attract and maintain customers.

It is unlike the nineteenth century when the scope for applying competitive thinking to business situations appeared to be limited. Intense competition had emerged in many lines of business, but individual firms apparently often lacked the potential to have much of an influence on competitive outcomes. Instead, in most lines of business, with the exception of a few commodities in which international trade had developed, firms had an incentive to remain small and to employ as little fixed capital as possible. It was in this era that Adam Smith penned his famous description of market forces as an "invisible hand" that was largely beyond the control of individual firms. (*Pankaj Ghemawat*, July 22, 2002).

The scope for strategy as a way to control market forces and shape the competitive environment started to become clearer in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the United States, the

building of the railroads after 1850 led to the development of mass markets for the first time. Along with improved access to capital and credit, mass markets encouraged large-scale investment to exploit economies of scale in production and economies of scope in distribution. It was during this era that in some industries, Adam Smith's "invisible hand" was gradually termed as the "visible hand" of professional managers by Alfred D. Chandler Jr.

By the late nineteenth century, new firms had begun to emerge hence altering the competitive environment to what business organizations are going through today. *(Business History Review; Spring 2002; 76, 1; pg. 37).*

Resource-acquiring institutions such as colleges and universities are not left behind in terms of competition. They understand that positive public attitudes about what they offer are important because they affect their financial stability and support of their academic programs. Faculty and administration have come to recognize that visibility of their institution is important. This is because this is an age of student consumerism, where even the most prestigious and selective institutions must respond to student interests and concerns. The central element of the new competitive environment is that students increasingly see themselves as "buyers" of education product. They demand that the academic institutions serve their specific needs in terms of communication, curriculum, courses offered, and facilities.

Given this reality, these institutions have no choice but to be cognizant of their strategies if they expect to gain and hold public support against that of their competitors. Without specific action, most institutions will find themselves the target of continuing criticism by external publics, ranging from students and parents.

In response to changing conditions in the economy, technology, public opinion, and the behavior of competitors, organizations have instituted a variety of techniques to enhance visibility. Measured

through sales volume, corporate visibility, and change in public opinion, most techniques have focused on improvement in corporate products and services based on information about consumers' needs, preferences, values, and satisfaction.

Significant resources have been spent on opinion research, marketing, improvement in services, and staff development to improve the public's perception of organizational products and operations.

Institute of Advanced Technology, being one of these institutions offers a wide range of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Business training and education. It specializes in offering End User, Professional and Career Training and Education to individuals as well as Public and Private corporate organization seeking to develop their personnel.

The institute has been conducting ICT and Business courses in partnership with distinguished international and local partners since 1991. Its mission is to delight their customers, enhance their stakeholders' social and economic well-being and continuously expand their market share by aligning their training with industry best-practice benchmarks, and providing world class quality education and training through modern and conducive learning environments. To achieve its mission, the institute carries out various activities that are geared towards reaching a wide area of customers.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

As promotional expenditures continue to increase, companies use thousands of shillings on promotion alone. As a result, company owners demand greater accountability as they would want to know what the advertising return on investments is. On the other hand, marketers have argued there are too many variables involved in a buying decision over too long a period to accurately measure the contribution of a single advertisement or campaign. Traditional television advertisement has come under increasing pressure to produce measures of its value. In particular one would want to know the value of firm's communication strategies built around themes such as Coca-Cola, 'make it real'. Due to the perceived

value, companies are using huge promotional budget to sponsor events where names and contact information of prospects can be collected and tracked or for direct marketing and online advertisements where the number of types of responses can be measured.

In the same way, in its years of existence Institute of Advanced technology has always been allocating budgets to fund marketing activities that will communicate their products to consumers. While all those activities may seem yielding, there has not been any dedicated study to examine them and evaluate how effective they are. The purpose of this research is to examine the communication strategies that the organization has been using to enhance visibility, and to evaluate the effectiveness of those strategies.

1.3 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is to investigate the communication strategies that Institute of Advanced Technology uses to enhance visibility and how effective those strategies are to the organization.

1.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The objectives for my research are;

1. To identify the activities that Institute of Advanced Technology engages in, in order to enhance visibility.

2. To examine the role played by various departments within the organization to enhance visibility

3. To investigate how the organization is using modern technologies to communicate to their targeted customers.

4. To investigate the effectiveness of these strategies on the target groups

1.5 JUSTIFICATION

Institute of Advanced Technology has been in existence since 1991. Within the years of existence, the company's stakeholders have worked hard to see it grow to what it is today. Its vision being to be recognized as Africa's center of excellence, role model and authority in education and training, the company stakeholders have engaged in various activities to help enhance visibility in order to have a wide reach of its customers. However, there is need for evaluation of the effectiveness of these strategies so as to come up with recommendations that may help the company improve their already existing strategies or come up with better ones.

1.6 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

1.6.1 Accessibility of data

Respondents may not be willing to provide all the information due to various reasons.

1.6.2 Time constraint

Time will be major limitations to the study this is mainly because the researcher is a full time worker and due to the short time allocated to data collection.

1.6.3 Financial constraint

The researcher will have to move from one IAT branch to another which will require transport budgets included considered

1.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAME WORK

Extraneous variables

Technological changes
Economic changes
Competitor's strategies

Independent variables

Promotion and communication strategies

Advertising

Sales promotion

Public relations

Direct marketing

Personal selling

Dependent variables

Enhance visibility

Sales volumes

Corporate visibility

Change in public opinion
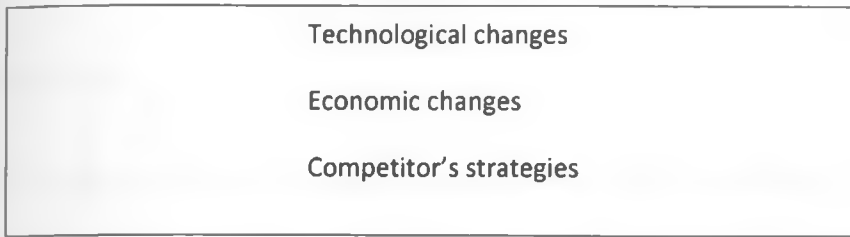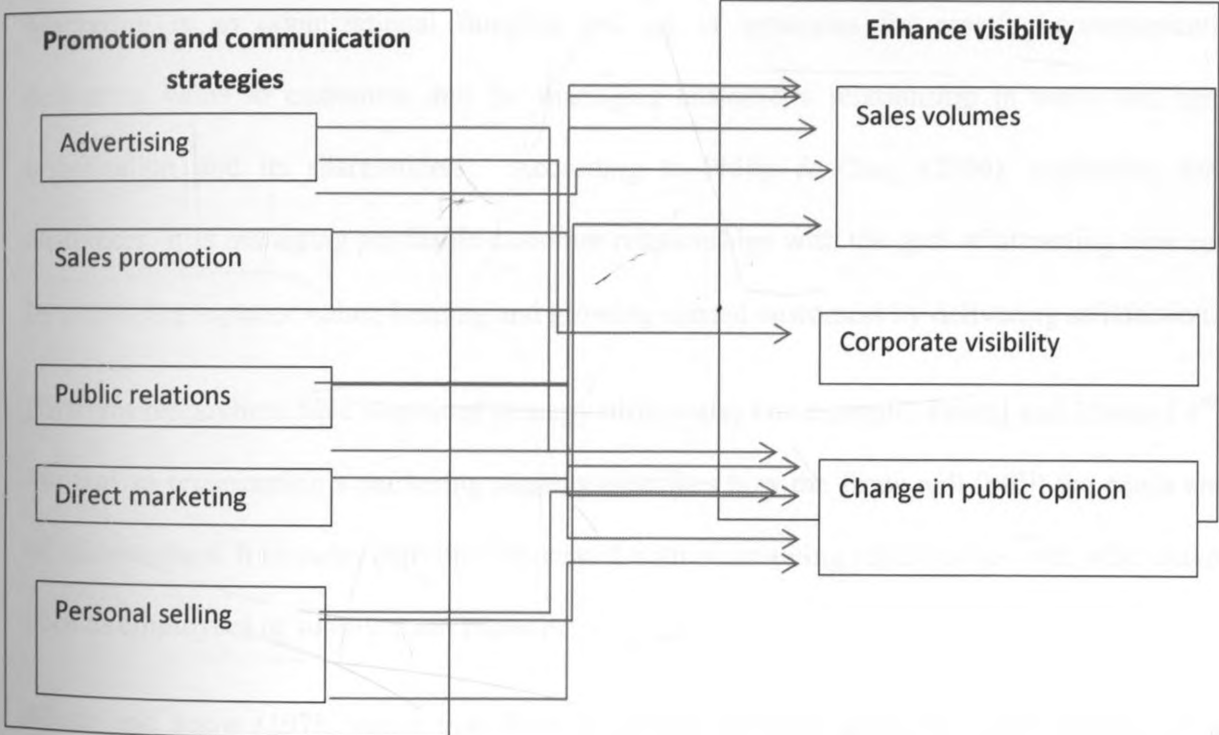
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section discusses literature on marketing and communication strategy. The main focus is on how different writers define marketing strategy and the various promotion mix element, mainly advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing and internet marketing.

2.2 Marketing strategy

Marketing is an organizational function and set of processes for creating communication and delivering value to customers and for managing customer's relationship in ways that benefit the organization and its shareholders. According to Philip & Gary (2006), marketing deals with customers. It is managing profitable customer relationships with the goal of attracting new customers by promising superior value, keeping and growing current customers by delivering satisfaction.

Different researchers have explained strategy differently. For example, Ferrell and Michael 4th edition say that an organization's marketing strategy describes how the firms will fulfill the needs and wants of its customers. It includes activities associated with maintaining relationships with other stakeholders such as employees or supply chain partners.

Myles and Snow (1978) noted that firms in general develop relatively stable patterns of strategic behavior in order to accomplish a good alignment with perceived environmental conditions.

Porter's (1998) well known five forces model determines the state of completions in industry using three generic strategies that can be pursued by almost any firm: cost leadership, differentiation and focus. A cost leadership strategy indicates that firms pursue economies of scale which allows them to

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be a low cost producer and to sell at a lower price than the competitors. Differentiation means that the firm tries to charge a premium price. The focus or niche strategy applies either to cost relationship or different businesses concentrate on a specific market, group of customers, product or service.

Zahra (1993) also noted that strategy offers a framework within which the company defines possible means for achieving goals.

As David and Nigel (2006) put it, during 1990s many strategy guidelines offered by consultants, executives and academics to guide business strategy formulation. These strategy paradigms propose a range of actions including reengineering the corporations, total quality management, building distinctive competencies, re-inventing the organization and strategic partnering. The evidence suggests that strategic choices matter because they have a significant impact on company's performance.

According Henry Mintzberg, Prof Bruce Ahlstrand and Joseph B. Lampel (2008), marketing strategy consists of the analysis strategy development and implementation activities i.e. developing a vision about markets of interests to the organization, selecting market target strategies, setting objectives and developing, implementing and managing the marketing program positioning strategies designed to meet the value requirements of customers in each market target.

Gerry Johnsons & Keran Scholes in their book: Exploring Corporate Strategies (1996) define strategy as the direction and scope of an organization over long term; which achieves advantage for the organization through configuration of resources within a changing environment to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder's expectations.

To David Campbell, George Stonehouse and Bill Houston (2002) strategic decisions are concerned with or affect the long term direction in an organization. The decisions normally try to achieve some advantage of an organization such as competition. Also, the decisions are concerned with the scope of

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an organization's activities and marching the activities to the environment in which the organization operates. Hey can also be seen as building on or stretching an organization's resources and competencies to create opportunities or to capitalize on them.

According to Ferrel & Michael (2009), competing in today's economy means finding ways to break out of commodity status to meet customer's needs better than competing firms. It requires strategic decisions that are concerned with or affect the long term direction of an organization, to achieve some advantage of an organization such as competition. This requires a clear understanding of the scope of an organization activities and matching the activities to the environment in which it operates thus building or stretching an organization's resources and competencies to create opportunities or to capitalize on them.

James Rowe (2008) states that all organizations both for profit and nonprofit require effective planning and a sound marketing strategy to achieve this effectively. Without efforts, organizations could not satisfy customers or meet the needs of other shareholders. For example, having effective marketing strategy allows Toyota to develop popular products such as its line of hybrid vehicles and its low cost scion line.

However, marketing in today's economy is not easy. This is because marketers are faced with challenges such as; Power shift to customers where the internet has shifted power to customers and marketers. Rather than businesses having the ability to manipulate customers, through technology customers often manipulate businesses because of their access to information and ability to compare shops.

Also there has been a massive increase in product selection. The variety and assortment of goods and services offered for sale on the internet and traditional stores is staggering, exposing marketers to

inroads by competitors from every corner. The vast amounts of information available online has changed the way we communicate, read news and entertain ourselves.

In the works of Prof Gerry Johnson, Prof Richard Whittington and Prof Kevan Scholes (2010), Audience and media segmentation is another challenge marketers today are facing. The identification and selection of one or more target markets is the result of marketing segmentation. Marketers engage in marketing segmentation when they divide the total market into smaller relatively homogenous groups or segments that share similar needs, wants or characteristics. When marketers select one or more target markets they identify one or more segments of individuals, businesses or institutions towards which the firm's marketing efforts will be directed. This has become a challenge since the advent of cable television in the 1970s because mass media audiences have become increasingly fragmented due to the sheer number of media choices that are available today and the limited time that people have to devote to any one medium.

Television audiences for example are now faced with a variety of programs they can choose to watch. When the growth of internet, satellite radio and mobile communication is added to the mix it becomes increasingly difficult for marketers to reach a true mass audience. This segmentation has also made it difficult for marketers to keep up with technology and industry trends. In fact, a research that was done by Hospital Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI) advisory board points out that "Staying current on all of the issues, technologies, and trends in our industry today feels like a full-time job in itself." From

(http://www.hsmai.org/files/Article_Overcoming_the_Top_10_Challenges_FINAL.pdf)

It is due to these challenges that Ferrell & Michel noted that effective marketing requires sound strategic planning at a number of levels in an organization. At the top level the organization planners

concern themselves with macro issues such as corporate mission, management of the mix of strategic business units, resource acquisition and corporate policy decisions. At the middle level typically a division of strategic business unit concerns themselves with similar issues but focus on those that pertains their particular products or markets. At the lower levels the organization is much more tactical in nature. They concern themselves with the development of marketing plans, more specific game plans for connecting products and markets in ways that satisfy both the organization and the customer's objectives.

Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong (2006) also noted that marketing strategies and programs operate within the context broader companywide strategic plans. Thus, marketing strategy is the logic by which the company hopes to achieve profitable relationships. Competitive marketing strategies are those that strongly position the company against competitors that give the company the strongest possible strategic advantage. A further explanation by Bonnie L. Drewniany and Jerome Jewler (2007) is that conducting business in the new digital age will call for a new model for marketing strategy and practice. The digital age has fundamentally changed customer's notion on convenience, speed, price, product information and service. Thus today's marketing requires new thinking and action.

2.3 Promotion and communication strategy

An evaluation was done to show the relationship between firms and effective communication campaigns in North America. A case study of BMW reviewed that in early 2002 BMW and its ad agency faced a stiff challenge in making the new vehicle- a MINI Cooper visible to the U.S market. A few years earlier BMW had acquired the British-made MINI auto mobile brand. Now, inspired by the success of the nostalgia-mobiles such as the VW New Beetle and PT Cruiser, BMW wanted to introduce a souped-up modernized version of the MINI Cooper into the U.S market. The car itself was

potent but tiny and it had a funky two-tone, retro-60s look. So, the question was how to make this quirky little MINI visible to the consumers and get them interested in it. All the company needed was an improved communication campaigns. Thus the MINI marketers ruled against mass media campaigns since they seemed not to work for this particular car and instead assembled a rich mix of unconventional media carefully integrated to create personality for the car and tremendous buzz of excitement among consumers.

Alex Bogusky, the company's executive creative director said, 'To prove to people that this was an out-of-the ordinary vehicle, we agreed that we would use unique ways of communicating our messages.' The company's choice was to break away from the traditional automotive advertising that used flashy expensive network television and glossy magazine placement, to communication campaigns that focused on media and tactics that let consumers experience the car firsthand. As Bogusky puts it, the MINI campaigns became a smashing success creating an almost cult-like following for the personable little car. By the time the car was introduced in spring 2002, the buyer waiting list was approximately 10 months long. (Philip & Gary (2006))

Communication strategy is a major part of local or international marketing activities. It is not enough to produce and make available products or services; but it is also necessary to provide information that buyers need to make purchasing decisions. A communication strategy is a verbal or none verbal transmission of information between someone wishing to express an idea and someone else who is expected or expecting to get the idea. (Gerald & Edwin 2011)

Promotion mix which is a set of elements- public relations, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing etc. is a form of communication strategy. It involves strategic decisions about five factors:

- Target audience
- Objectives of the promotion effort

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- Nature of the product

- Stage in the product's life cycle and

- Amount of money available for promotion.

Communication activities that make up promotion strategy inform people about products and persuade the company's buyers, channel organization and public at large to purchase the brands. (David & Nigel)

Charles w. Hill noted that communication strategy involves communicating the attributes of the product to prospective customers. A number of communication channels are available for a firm, which include, direct marketing, sales promotion, direct marketing and advertising. A firm's communication strategy is defined by its choice of channel. Some firms rely primarily on direct marketing, others point of sale promotion or direct marketing, mass advertising, and others use several channels simultaneously to communicate their message to prospective customers.

Roger A. Kerin & William Rudelius further added that fundamental communication requires four elements; Message, source, channel and receiver. The source is the company's sales person who has the information to convey. This information, for example particulars of a new weight reduction drink, is the message. The consumer who reads the message is the receiver and the message is communicated by a means of a channel such as radio, television etc. All the promotion elements can be used to inform prospective buyers about the benefits of a product or service to prospective buyers, persuade them to try it, and to remind them later about the benefits they enjoyed by using the product or service.

According to Michael, Bruce &William (2005), despite the fact that marketers have a variety of promotional tools at their disposal, to make effective use of them a company's personal selling, advertising and other promotional activities should form a coordinated promotional program within its

total marketing plan. However, these activities are fragmented in many firms within potentially damaging consequences. For example, advertising director and sales force managers may come into conflict over resources or the sales force may not be adequately informed about the details of a particular sales promotion effort. This would not happen if all these elements are part of integrated marketing communication effort, a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated measurable, persuasive communications within an organization's internal and external audience.

2.4 Advertising

Gerald Albausm & Edwin Duerr (2011) defined advertising as a non-personal presentation of sales messages through various mass media paid for by the advertisers. Advertising helps building long term product identity and offer significant savings in production cost of a campaign. It also offers companies economies of scale in advertising as well as improved access to distribution channel. For example, a study investigating advertising appeals and cultural values in television advertisements form newly emerging markets in sub- Saharan Africa- Ghana, Nigeria and South Africa included among its findings one suggesting that advertisers can safely use the beauty appeals as an advertising appeal. (oyedele, Minor & Ghanem 2009).

According to Ferrell & Michael (2009) advertising is a paid, non-personal communication transmitted through media such as television, radio, magazines, newspapers, direct mail, outdoor display, internet and mobile devices. It is the key component of promotion and is usually one of the most visible elements of marketing communication program because it is flexible and can be used in an extremely large or small target audience. It can be a coefficient element of a marketing communication program when used to reach a large number of people through television, magazine, newspaper outdoor displays or online ads. There are two different types of advertising:

2.4.1 Institutional advertising- this promotes a firm's image and culture with the goal of creating and maintaining an overall corporate image. For example IBC advertises that it provides infrastructure and solutions for e-business. Aimed at various stakeholders, customer advocacy groups, government regulators or the public at large, institutional advertising can create a positive view of the organization.

2.4.2 Product advertising- this promotes the image, feature, uses benefits and attributes of products (pg. 290). The goal is to increase customer interest and awareness in the product category in order to increase the size of the entire market.

Philip & Gary (2006) also noted that advertising includes print, broadcast, outdoor, internet and other forms. It can reach masses of geographically dispersed buyers at a low cost per exposer and it enables the seller to repeat a message many times. For example, television advertising can reach huge audiences. Beyond its reach, large scale advertising says something positive about the seller's size, polarity and success. Because of advertising's public nature customers seem to view advertised products as more legitimate. Advertising is also very expensive- it allows the company to dramatize its products through the artful use of visuals, print, sound and color. On the other hand, advertising can be used to build up a long term image for a product and also trigger quick sale.

According to Bonnie L. Drewniany, A. Jerome Jewler (2007), although advertising reaches many people quickly, it is impersonal and cannot be as directly persuasive as can company sales people. For the most part, advertising can carry on only one way communication with the audience and the audience does not feel that it has to pay attention or respond. In addition, advertising can be very costly. Although some advertising forms such as newspapers and radio can be done on small budgets, other forms such as network television advertising require very large budgets.

2.5 Personal selling

Philip and Gary (2006) noted that selling is one of the oldest professionals in the world. When one wants to buy something they usually go to a concerned shop and purchase it from there. But, sometimes sellers bring certain goods or products and make them available to buyers at their place. For example, a person selling vegetables or rice may carry them in a cart and move from door to door to sell. The same may be noticed for persons selling carpets, electronic items, etc. in a similar fashion. While traveling in buses or local trains there may people selling pens, toys, books, combs, etc. inside the bus or train. In cities also persons move from door to door to sell different products like water purifiers, air purifiers, detergents, mosquito repellents, etc.

A further explanation of personal selling by Tom Altstiel &Jean Grow (2009) is that it involves two-way personal communication between sales people and individual customers – whether face-face, by telephone, through video or web conferences. The people who do the selling go by many names: sales people, sales representatives, account executive, sales consultants, sales engineers, or district managers.

Personal selling can be more effective than advertising because sales persons can probe customers to learn more about their problems, and then adjust the marketing offer and presentation to fit the special needs of each customer (Don E. Schultz, (1981))

Sales people serve both masters – the seller and the buyer in that they represent the company to customers, find and develop new customers, and communicate information about the company's products and services. They sell products by approaching customers, presenting their products, answering objections, negotiating prices and terms and closing sales. Also, sales people represent customers to the company, acting inside the firm as 'champions' of customer's interests and managing

the buyer selling relationships. They relay customer concerns about company products and actions back inside to those who can handle them. They learn customer's needs and work with other marketing and non-marketing people in the company to develop greater customer value. (Principles of marketing pg. 488)

According to Ferrel and Michael, this is personal selling. It attempts to inform customers about products and persuade them to purchase those products. It is the most precise form of communication because it ensures companies that they are in direct contact with an excellent prospect.

Michael, Bruce & William noted that personal selling takes two different types.

Inside selling – this is where customers come to the sales people

Outside selling – This is where the sales people go to the customers. They make contact by telephone or in person.

They further noted that personal selling consists of the following elements:

Face-to-Face interaction: Personal selling involves a salesmen having face-to-face interaction with the prospective buyers.

Persuasion: Personal selling requires persuasion on the part of the seller to the prospective customers to buy the product. So a salesman must have the ability to convince the customers so that an interest may be created in the mind of the customers to use that product.

Flexibility: The approach of personal selling is always flexible. Sometimes salesman may explain the features and benefits of the product, sometimes give demonstration of the use of product and also faces number of queries from the customers. Looking into the situation and interest of the customers, the approach of the salesman is decided instantly.

Promotion of sales: The ultimate objective of personal selling is to promote sales by convincing more and more customers to use the product.

Supply of Information: Personal selling provides information to customers regarding availability of the product, special features, uses and utility of the products. So it is an educative process.

Mutual Benefit: It is a two-way process. Both seller and buyer derive benefit from it. While customers feel satisfied with the goods, the seller enjoys the profits.

2.6 Public relations

This is a marketing communication function that carries out programs designed to earn public understanding and acceptance. Its main purpose is to achieve objectives that cannot be achieved by other means. (Tom Altstiel & Jean Grow, (2009))

For example if a company wants to gain recognition as one with social responsibility, this objective may often be accomplished much more effectively by a carefully planned campaign to receive a favorable editorial mention than by using paid advertisements. The context and source of the message may play an important role in how it is perceived and interpreted and whether or not it has the desired impact on attitudes of consumers, government officials or other persons with whom the company wants to have favorable reputation. (Gerald & Edwin 2011)

Philip Kotler and Gary Armstromg (2006) noted that a public relations specialist is an image shaper. Their job is to generate positive publicity for their client and enhance their reputation. The client can be a company, an individual or a government. In the government PR people are called press secretaries. They keep the public informed about the activity of government agencies, explain policy, and manage political campaigns. Public relations people working for a company may handle consumer relations, or the relationship between parts of the company such as the managers and employees, or different branch offices. Regardless, the successful public relations person must be a good communicator-in print, in person and on the phone. They cultivate and maintain contacts with journalists, set up speaking engagements, write executive speeches and annual reports, respond to

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inquiries and speak directly to the press on behalf of their client, keep lines of communication open between the many groups affected by a company's product and policies: consumers, shareholders, employees, and the managing body. They also write press releases and may be involved in producing sales or marketing material.

Ferrel and Michael (2009) further noted that public relations is meant to track attitudes, identify issues that may elicit public concern and develop programs to create and maintain positive relationships between firms and stakeholders. It can be used to promote firms, its people, its ideas and its image or even create an internal shared understanding among employees. It can improve the public's general awareness of company and can create specific image such as quality, innovativeness, value or concern for social issues.

In addition, public relations consist of various tools which include:

News/press releases: A new release is a few pages of typed written copy – typically fewer than 30 words used to draw attention to a company, event, product or person affiliated with the firm. News releases can be submitted to magazines, newspapers, television content, suppliers, key customers or firm's employees.

Feature article: This is a manuscript of up to 3000 words prepared for a specific purpose or target audience. For example, a firm's building a new production facility may supply a feature article to regional or local media outlets, chambers of commerce, local government and major firms in the area. They are useful when responding to negative events or publicity.

White paper: This is like a feature article but focuses on every specific topic of interest to the firm's stakeholders. They promote firm's stance in important products or market issues and can be used to promote the firm's products.

Press conference: This is a meeting with news media called to announce or respond to major events, media personnel receive invitation to a specific location with written materials, photographs, exhibits and event products given to them.

Event sponsorship: This is corporate sponsorship of major events such as sports.

Product placement: This is where products are placed in movies and television programs that consumers see as enjoying the product or using the product as part of the action.

Employee relations: These activities provide an organization's support for employees with respect to their jobs and lives. It can encompass many different activities including internal newsletters, training programs, employee's assistance programs and human resource programs. (Jim Collins (2001))

2.7 Sales promotion

Sales promotion includes several communications activities that attempt to provide added value or incentives to consumers, wholesalers, retailers, or other organizational customers to stimulate immediate sales. These efforts can attempt to stimulate product interest, trial, or purchase. It includes a broad assortment of promotional elements because it encompasses activities other than advertising, public relations, and personal selling. Its main goal is to induce product trial and purchase. (David & Nigel (2006))

Philip & Gary noted that sales promotion includes a variety of promotion activities designed to stimulate earlier or stronger market response. For example, a freestanding insert in the Sunday newspaper contains a coupon offering $1 off Folgers coffee. An email from Amazon.com offers free shipping on your next purchase over $35. The end –off- the- aisle display in the local supermarket tempts impulse buyers with a wall of Coke cartons. An executive buys a new Sony laptop and gets a free carrying case or a family buys a new Taurus and receives a factory rebate of $500. A hardware

store chain receives a ten percent discount on selected Black & Decker portable power tools if it agrees to advertise them in a local newspaper.

A further explanation of sales promotion as noted by Gerald & Edwin 2011 states that many tools can be used to accomplish sales promotion objectives, which include:

Consumer promotion tools: These include samples, coupons, cash refunds, price packs, premiums, advertising specialties, patronage rewards, point of purchase displays and demonstrations, contests sweepstakes and games.

Trade promotion tools: here manufacturers direct more sales promotion budgets towards retailers and wholesalers than to consumers. Trade promotions can persuade resellers to carry a brand, give it shelf space, promote it in advertising and push it to consumers.

Business promotion tools: Companies spend huge amounts on promotion to industrial customers. These business promotion tools are used to generate business leads, stimulate purchases, reward customers, and motivate sales people. The main focus here is conventions, trade shows and sales contests.

There are three types of sales promotion strategies: Push, Pull, or a combination of the two.

Push strategy- involves convincing trade intermediary channel members to "push" the product through the distribution channels to the ultimate consumer via promotions and personal selling efforts. The company promotes the product through a reseller who in turn promotes it to yet another reseller or the final consumer. Trade-promotion objectives are to persuade retailers or wholesalers to carry a brand, give a brand shelf space, promote a brand in advertising, and/or push a brand to final consumers. Typical tactics employed in push strategy are: allowances, buy-back guarantees, free trials, contests, specialty advertising items, discounts, displays, and premiums.

Pull strategy - attempts to get consumers to "pull" the product from the manufacturer through the marketing channel. The company focuses its marketing communications efforts on consumers in the hope that it stimulates interest and demand for the product at the end-user level. This strategy is often employed if distributors are reluctant to carry a product because it gets as many consumers as possible to go to retail outlets and request the product, thus pulling it through the channel. Consumer-promotion objectives are to entice consumers to try a new product, lure customers away from competitors' products, and get consumers to "load up" on a mature product, hold & reward loyal customers, and build consumer relationships. Typical tactics employed in pull strategy are: samples, coupons, cash refunds and rebates, premiums, advertising specialties, loyalty programs/patronage rewards, contests, sweepstakes, games, and point-of-purchase displays.

Car dealers often provide a good example of a **combination strategy**. If you pay attention to car dealers' advertising, you will often hear them speak of cash-back offers and dealer incentives. (From http://www.davedolak.com/promo.htm)

2.8 Direct marketing

David & Nigel (2006) defined direct marketing as a form of communication that includes the various channels that enable companies that make direct contact with individual buyers. (Ch. 12). It is often distinguished by aggressive tactics that attempt to reach new customers usually by means of unsolicited direct communications. It also involves the business attempting to locate, contact, offer, and make incentive-based information available to consumers.

Philip & Gary (2006) also noted that direct marketing consists of direct connections with carefully targeted individual consumers to both obtain an immediate response and cultivate lasting customer relationships. Direct marketers communicate directly with customers, often on one-to-one, interactive

basis. Using detailed databases, they tailor their marketing offers and communications to the needs of narrowly defined segments or even individual buyers.

Beyond brand and image building, direct marketers usually seek a direct, immediate and measurable consumer response.

According to Philip & Gary, the major forms of direct marketing include Direct-mail marketing, Telephone marketing, Catalog marketing, direct-response television marketing and Kiosk marketing. Telephone marketing involves using telephone to sell directly to consumers and business customers. Direct mail marketing is sending an offer, announcement, reminder or other items to a person a particular address using highly selective mailing list. Catalog marketing involves a printed, bound piece of at least eight pages selling multiple products and offering direct ordering mechanisms. With the growth of internet it also involves adding web based catalogs. Direct-response television marketing is where direct marketers air television spots, often 60 to 120 seconds long, that persuasively describe a product and give customers a toll- free number for ordering. In Kiosk marketing companies place information and ordering machines called kiosks in stores, airports, and other locations so that customers have access to items offered. (Robert S. Kaplan (1996))

Benefits of direct marketing

For buyers direct marketing is convenient, easy to use and private. From the comfort of their homes or offices buyers can browse mail catalogs or company websites at any time of their day or night. Direct marketing also gives buyers ready access to a wealth of products and information at home and around the globe.

For sellers direct marketing is a powerful tool for building customer relationships. Using database marketing marketers can target small groups or individual customers, tailor offers to individual needs

and promote those offers through personalized communication. Direct marketing can also be timed to reach the prospect at just the right moment.

Finally, direct marketing can offer sellers a low-cost, efficient alternative for reaching their market.

2.9 Technology in marketing

"Communication must be viewed more broadly than as just the use of paid media advertising, public speaking and sales promotion". (Christopher Lovelock and Jochen Wirtz, 2004) Today there are many other ways for a service business to communicate with current customers. The location and atmosphere, corporate design, features such as colours and graphics elements, appearance and behavior of employees, design of websites- all contribute to an impression in the customer's mind that reinforces or contradicts the specific of formal communication messages.

Recent technological advances have created a new digital age. Widespread use of the internet and other powerful technologies are having dramatic impact on marketers and buyers. Studies have shown that internet marketing is taking the lead in 21st century. For example, in 2002, the largest portion of internet users in North America was about a third of global online population. The United States followed with an estimate of 150 million users. The next largest internet users were in Japan (34m) and china (26m). By 2007 the growth of internet access among the world's citizens had exploded to 1.5 billion. (David & Nigel (2006))

New technology tools and document management services can now analyse customer preferences, niche markets, regional buying habits and more to help businesses focus efforts and resources.

Active Data Services, for example, located in Research Triangle Park, is an integrated document management solutions provider, handling scanning, imaging and document management, as well as

data storage, printing and mailing. The company can generate and manage such material as personalized mailings, enrolment forms or kits and customer service correspondence.

Steve Jones, the director of technology solutions said "We also do marketing programs for businesses and start-ups." The company will review your business or marketing plan and then develop material that targets the specific customers likely to respond. For instance, says Jones, "We designed a program for a new, upscale, large-engine pleasure boat being designed and built for clients in North Carolina and the Southeast. We bought marketing databases and utilized a set of criteria that created a mailer concept of text and images that went out to unique customers based on demographics, likes and dislikes, previous purchases of existing pleasure craft and more."

"There's a lot of convergence between the Internet and TV now," says Koeppel. "Some marketers aren't even using 800 numbers anymore. They just list a Web site for customers to visit." He points to eHarmony as an example of an online marketer that has dramatically boosted business by using cable TV outlets to drive its online traffic.

According to Koeppel, other digital buying efforts can take advantage of the inexpensive reach of the Internet. Ads on satellite TV that allow viewers to click on a link with the remote, which then loads a Web page with more information or offers. For instance, a car ad can lead to a page that lists local dealers.

Mobile phone ads, with GPS and location-based, one-to-one offers, are a hot new area. As are video-on-demand, or VOD, services on PCs and TV, which are being used for short commercials that allow consumers to click links for more information. Similarly, digital and interactive signage in retail shops, including flat-screen TVs and kiosks, give in-store customers information or special details.

(*http://www.microsoft.com/business/en-us/resources/technology/business-software/use-of-technology-in-marketing.)*

The truth is that technology has created a grey area between personal and impersonal communication. For example, firms offer combined word processing technology with information with a database to create an impression of personalization such s direct mail and email messages containing a personal salutation and perhaps some references to a specific situation or past use of a particular product. Similarly, interactive software, voice recognition technology and computer generated voice prompt and responses can stimulate a two way conversation.

Christopher Lovelock & Jochen Wirtz (2004) pointed out that marketers use the internet for a variety of communication task which include promoting consumer awareness and interest, providing information and consultation, facilitating two-way communication with customers through email and chat rooms, stimulating product trial, enabling customers to place orders, and measuring the effectiveness of specific advertising or promotional campaigns.

Gerald & Edwin (2011) further noted that in internet marketing websites themselves are advertisements since it can inform, persuade and remind customers about the company or its products and services. Advertisements placed on websites usually take two forms.

A banner advertisement in which firms pay to place banners and buttons on portals such as yahoo and other firm's websites, with the goal to draw online traffic to the site advertiser's own sites. The power of the burner advertisement is that it can be targeted at a particular audience in the hope that the customer will click on the ad and then will be exposed to more details. Also, all visitors to a page will see an advert either noting it cautiously or viewing it subconsciously. This may help establish or reinforce a brand image.

The second form is search engine advertisement, a form of reverse broadcast network. They let advertisers know exactly what consumers want through their keyword search and advertisers can then target relevant marketing communications directly at consumers. (Terence A. Shimp, 2007).

2.10 Branding

Terence (2007)noted that a brand exists when a marketing entity i.e. a product, retail outlet, service or even a geographical place such as an entire country, region, state or city receives its own name, term, sign, symbol, design or any particular combination of these elements as a form of identification. In other words, it is everything that one company's particular offering stands for, in comparison to other brands in a product category. It represents a set of values that its marketers, senior company officials and other employees consistently embrace and communicates for an extended period.

Brand awareness is an issue of whether a brand name comes to mind when consumers think about a particular product category and the ease with which the name is evoked. On the other hand, brand image represents the associations that are activated in memory when people think about a particular brand. These associations can be conceptualized in terms of type favourability, strength and uniqueness. (pg. 305)

In the work of Philip kotler and Gary Armstrong (2006), it is noted that organizations in today's competitive environment continue in their struggle to carve out their competitive niche in the marketplace. In many cases, this struggle has manifested itself in the provision of exceptional service, regardless of whether the organization's core product is a physical good or a service in its own right. Thus, we see a shift in thinking towards the new dominant logic for marketing, one in which the service (as manifested through operant resources), as opposed to the provision of physical goods (operand resources), is the basis for economic exchange. Consistent with the provision of exceptional

service, investment in the organization's brand is considered to be a strategic weapon in the quest for an edge over competitors.

To Richard Rumelt (2011), the creation of a strong brand and the deliverance of perceived service quality are premised by employees' ability to deliver on customer expectations. (pg. 250) Thus, adoption of internal-oriented initiatives, directed at employees improving service quality and bringing the brand to life, is advocated.

From an external market perspective, branding involves the creation of mental structures that help the target audience to organize their knowledge with respect to that particular product/organization. (Pg. 243) In doing so, the target audience is able to clarify their decision making with respect to that product/organization and, in turn, this process provides value to an organization through improved customer buying habits. Branding, however, is not only an opportunity to shape customers' perceptions with respect to the organization; it is also an opportunity to shape employee perceptions as well. According to Jacobs, a brand represents the relationship an organization has with its employees just as much as it represents the relationship that it has with its customers.

Burmann, C. and Zeplin, S. (2005) further explain that in the context of pure services, it is the actual experience with the brand that dominates customer brand perceptions, of which employees play a major role. As such, regardless of how well the brand is presented, nothing will salvage a weak brand experience. Similarly, in relation to the marketing of physical goods, it is the employees who must understand what the brand means, and how it provides value to consumers, in order for its tangible and intangible components to be developed and delivered accordingly. It is for this primary reason that internal brand management is seen as a significant strategic organizational initiative.

W. Chan Kim (2004) notes that there is an inherent power in having an informed workforce that is both able and committed to delivering the brand promise. Without such brand knowledge, employees are unable to transform the brand vision into the brand reality.

2.11 THEORITICAL FRAME WORK

This project will be informed by two theories; game theory and systems theory.

2.10.1 Systems theory

A system is an assemblage of interrelated parts that work together by way of some driving process. It can be open or closed.

Systems theory was proposed in the 1940's by the biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy, and furthered by Ross Ashby (Introduction to Cybernetics, 1956). Von Bertalanffy was both reacting against reductionism and attempting to revive the unity of science. He emphasized that real systems are open to, and interact with, their environments, and that they can acquire qualitatively new properties through emergence, resulting in continual evolution. Systems theory focuses on the arrangement of and relations between the parts which connect them into a whole. This particular organization determines a system, which is independent of the concrete substance of the elements (e.g. particles, cells, transistors, people, etc.). Systems concepts include: system-environment boundary, input, output, process, state, hierarchy, goal-directedness, and information.

This particular project intends to look at Institute of Advanced Technology as an open system, made up of many interrelated parts/ departments that function together. It seeks to explain the synergy and interdependence of various departments to achieve the organization's communication goals.

This is because the Laws that govern open systems can be applied to systems of any form including organizations. The principles of an open systems theory state that Parts that make up the system are interrelated, health of overall system is contingent on subsystem functioning, open systems import

and export material from and to the environment, and materials can pass through permeable boundaries.

This therefore recognizes that Institute of Advanced Technology is an interdependence of personnel i.e. managers, lecturers, students, workers and guardians, and that organizational structure and function are impacted by the environment as well as the affected by outside stakeholders .

2.10.2 Game theory (competitive advantage theory)

Despite the fact that the above theory addressees the issue of communication and the organization's interaction with its environment, it does not address the issue of competition, which is the main reason for the organization's efforts to enhance visibility. Competitive advantage theory is helpful here. The theory was developed by Michael Porter's in 1985 and it suggests that states and businesses should pursue policies that create high-quality goods to sell at high prices in the market.

"Competitive advantage occurs when an organization acquires or develops an attribute or combination of attributes that allows it to outperform its competitors. These attributes can include access to natural resources, such as high grade ores or inexpensive power, or access to highly trained and skilled personnel human resources and new technologies such as robotics and information technology either included as a part of the product, or to assist making it." (Stutz and Warf 2009)

The theory therefore helps this project in looking into the products that Institute of Advanced Technology offers and the quality attributes, together with the use of both natural and human resources that make them more competitive in the market. The evaluation of how the organization has included new technologies as part of the product or to assist in enhancing visibility is also necessary for the project.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter basically will examine the various methods that will be used to collect the data for analysis and also it will seek to define the population from which the sample will be drawn from. The research design to be used will also be highlighted as well as the sampling approach to be used in the study.

3.2 Research design

The research is a case study of institute of Advanced Technology that attempts to gather information and data regarding communication strategies used to enhance visibility and their effectiveness. The researcher will use simple statistical methods to explore the effectiveness of communication strategies used by the organization to enhance visibility, so as to be able to make conclusions. Interviews and questionnaires will be used to come up with data that will address the research problem.

3.3 Sampling Design

Probability sampling method will be used to ensure each and every group in the target population has equal chances to participate in the study. Data will be collected from departmental managers and college students. Random sampling will be used to identify 50 students from IAT. The researcher will also use purposive or judgmental sampling as per the required information with respect to the objectives of this study, to identify 3 managers and a customer care representative and a teaching staff representative. The managers will include Marketing manager, branch manager, and IT manager. The customer care and teaching staff representatives will be chosen from any branch.

3.4 Data Collection Method

This study will make use of primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected using questionnaires, interviews. Secondary data will include student's enrollment records as well as any other materials like the marketing reports that will be of help as data source. Questionnaires will be prepared to be administered to the students who are already at IAT while Interviews will be directed to the management, teaching staff and customer care departments.

3.5 Data Analysis and Reporting

The response collected in form of data will be analyzed by use of descriptive statistics. The data collected will be analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The researcher will either calculate the percentage of people that will respond to a particular question or give in numbers. Other data presentation techniques that may be used will include tabulation, bar graphs and pie charts where necessary.

3.6 Limitation of the Study

Due to the fact that most information will be sought from the organization's management practices, the management may withhold some important information. Also, the students may be hesitant to respond to questionnaires given either because of time or the fear of being mentioned. As a way to enhance co-operation among respondents the researcher will ensure that the information given by respondents will be private and confidential and avoid name writing on the questionnaire to ensure the same.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data gathered trough questionnaires and interviews in the Institute of Advanced Technology is presented and analyzed. The chapter discusses the results of the questionnaires and interviews responded by 50 students, 3 mangers, customer care representative and a staff representative in the said locale of the study. Prior to the initiation of the survey process, the purpose, the significance and objectives of the study were relayed to the participants. They were also assured that all the information they had provided are solely for the purpose of the study while their identities would remain confidential. All questions asked in the interview and structured questionnaires pertain only to the respondents' insights on the visibility of Institute of Advanced Technology.

For a clearer presentation, the findings of the survey are presented in graphs charts and tables.

To give an appropriate flow of discussion, findings are also divided into sections. The first section focuses on the overall data gathered from the interviews with managers with regard to the strategies used and the role played by various departments to enhance visibility.

Section two gives a summary of analysis of data collected using questionnaires. This includes demographic profile of the participants used in the study, in which their profile was categorized according to the respondents' age, gender, level of education and occupation, how the respondents knew about the organization, web pages, social media responses and the status of the services offered by Institute of Advanced technology. The discussion on the interpretation of data is given in section three.

4.2 Strategies used to enhance visibility

An interview that was done by the researcher with the representatives of various departments revealed that the institution has been using the following activities:

4.2.1 Newspaper advert

A newspaper advert is done on Daily newspaper, on weekly bases to notify the public on the courses offered at IAT. Depending on the event or courses advertised on the newspaper, the customer care department is able to receive calls from enquirers.

4.2.2 Word of mouth

There are different ways of facilitating the flow of information about IAT to people who are not part of the institution. One of them is thorough discount cards for students who register for End User Training. When they attend classes, on the first day of their class the trainer gives them a discount card with the slogan "If you are enjoying your time with IAT, Don't keep it a secret.....tell a friend". This card is supposed to be given to friends and relatives who are not students at IAT. If any of the friends or relative comes to register for a course in any IAT branches with the card then both the student who gave out the card and the friend are given the discount as per that card.

4.2.3 Literature

The other way is though literature that are given to all enquirers at the customer service desk either during the weak, career days or in any IAT marketing function. The brochures contain all the courses offered at IAT, their prices, durations as well as branches where they are offered and their contacts. When the enquirers carry those brochures, they are likely to pass the message to their friends and relatives.

There is also a relative scheme for all trainers given once a year. This is where trainers are given a chance to bring a certain number of their relatives or friends to study at very low prices. The trainer is therefore expected to pass this information to any person they would want to benefit from the scheme. Once these relatives benefit, they are likely to spread the information about the institution further to their friends. This has been the most yielding strategy.

4.2.4 School visits

School visits- this is a regular activity whereby schools request for career presentation or IAT chooses to go to high schools to make presentations on the courses that form four leavers can take. When they do the presentation, they also go ahead and send success card to all the candidates I those school. What the researcher got from the interviewee is that this is the most powerful activities they have carried out and it is baring fruits.

4.2.5 Ufunguo scholarships

Ufunguo scholarships run thorough out the year for the less advantaged people in the society that may not afford to do a course at IAT. The institution felt that there is need to give back to the society. This

is one of the strategies that have benefitted many people thus helping create a positive image about the organization.

4.2.6 Open/career days

Open days are done two or three times a year. The day targets all IAT students together with their friends and relatives as well as any other person that may want to know more about the institution and the products offered. The day's activities are carried out in all IAT branches to give an opportunity to any person that would want to enquire. An interview carried out with one of the interviewees revealed that the effectiveness of open days has been is dependent on the location. For some branches especially those based in town it works well while others seem not to be benefiting from this day very much, since there are very few students who come to register because they attended an open day.

4.2.7 Social media

The most used social media site is Facebook; each branch was allowed to join Facebook using an appropriate name and invite their staff and students, so as to make it visible to friends of friends. The following pages were opened: IAT Buruburu campus, IAT Yaya campus, IAT pension towers, IAT Nakuru campus, Degree/diploma students, and Registrar IAT. Each of them has a definite number of followers. IAT Buruburu page has 368 friends, Yaya 132, Pension towers 538, Nakuru 301, degree/diploma students 32 and registrar IAT 485 friends as shown in the graph below.
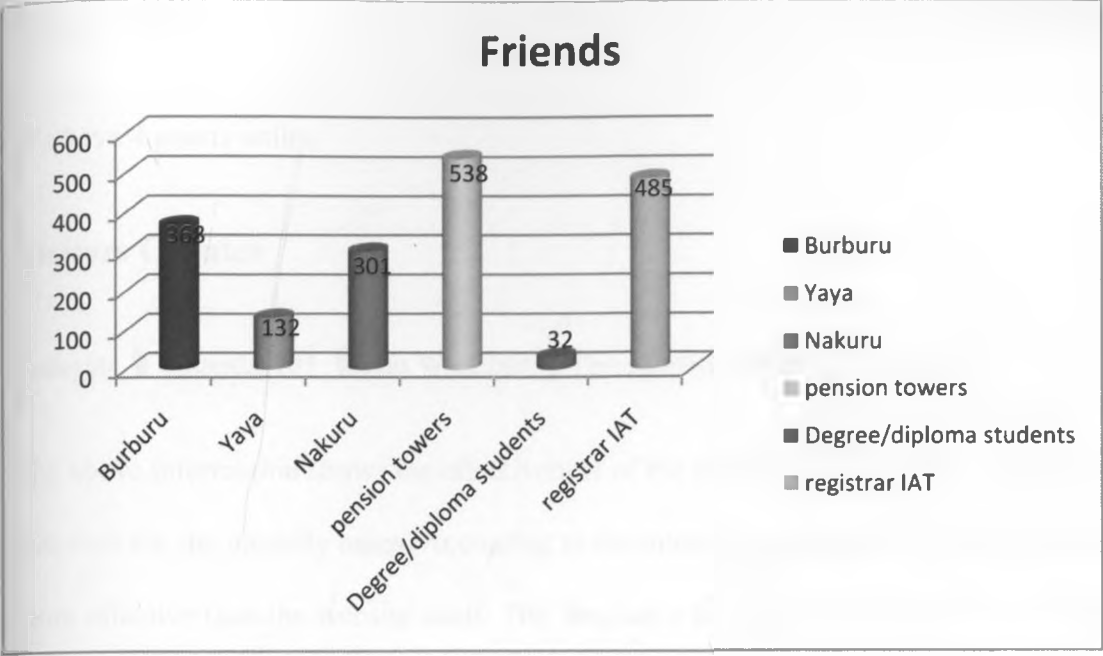
Figure 1: A graph showing the number of Facebook followers that each page has.

4.2.8 Website

IAT has a website that is available online. The website provided full information about the institution, centers and campuses, courses offered, news/ events, school of business as well as contacts. The site also provides a way through which those who visit the site can give feedback. However, the website has been dormant for some time though it is being worked on.

There is also a website portal which is doing well. The site has full information about college directory, news, career guide, a place to advertise, useful links, documents download and contacts. The site is also able to capture who is online and the number of people that have visited it on daily bases. For example, at the visitors counter on 18th July, the researcher and the interviewee were able to retrieve the following information from the portal:

Who's Online

We have 4 guests online

Visitors Counter

Today60 ♀ Yesterday103 ♀ This Week249 ♀ This Month1505 All Days13127

The above information shows the effectiveness of the site since one is able to see the number of people that visit the site on daily bases. According to the interviewee, though the site is new it is proving to be more effective than the website itself. The frequency of updating the websites and social media pages is dependent on the upcoming of new information.

Other strategies for enhancing visibility include T-shirts, caps, books, bags, and school vans that bare the IAT logo. Books and bags are given to students while t-shirts and caps are given to staff.

4.3 Role of departments

Apart from identifying the strategies used to communicate by the marketing department, the researcher also carried out interviews with representatives of Information technology (IT), teaching staff, center manager and customer care departments to identify their role in enhancing the organization's visibility. The results of the interviews were as follows.

4.3.1 Center managers

The work of center managers is to facilitate the activities that the marketing department comes up with. For example, when there is an open day, it is the work of the center manager to coordinate with marketing people and other staff to make sure that the day is a success. They also work with customer

care to consolidate reports on how enquirers knew about the organization so as to be able to know the strategy that works most. For example, the enquiry report gathered from Yaya branch shown that enquiries for 2010 were higher than those of 2011 and from the two a bigger number knew the organization through a friend or a relative while the rest said it was through newspaper and others. When asked whether the drop was related to how marketing was done, the interviewee said that possibly it was because in 2010 there were school presentations and also open days that were successful. The summary of their comparisons was given as follows:

Date	Enquiries	Word Of Mouth			NATION NEWSPAPER							Others					
		Friend															
		With an RAF Card	Without an RAF Card	Relative	ICDL/ Why IAT	IAT/ Schedule Ad	DBICT/Scheduled AD	PRE-UNIVERSITY	DEGREE PROGRAMS	DIPLOMA PROGRAMS	CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS	Exhibitions	Signposts & billboards	Posters	Website		Others
Jan	175	25	84	33	17	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	5	3	1	4
Feb	123	1	90	13	7	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	0	2
Mar	111	2	53	15	11	1	3	0	0	1	0	2	2	7	1	0	13
Apr	74	0	30	5	10	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	4	8	1	0	6
May	98	0	43	10	15	1	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	7	8	0	8
Jun	115	0	45	18	16	7	2	0	3	0	0	2	0	6	0	0	30
Jul	77	0	38	10	6	0	3	0	0	1	2	0	1	5	5	0	2
Aug	81	3	35	12	10	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	0	9
Sept	105	0	44	10	10	3	0	0	2	1	0					0	0
Oct	56	0	21	9	7	2	0	0	0	0	0					0	0
Nov	149	0	45	14	20	1	0	1	0	0	0					1	0
Dec	50	0	23	8	8	2	0	1	0	0	0					0	0
TOTAL	1214	31	551	157	137	23	20	2	6	3	4	4	13	45	23	2	74

Table 1: summary of enquiries for the year 2010(source: IAT Yaya Database)

Date	Enquiries	Word Of Mouth			NATION NEWSPAPER								Other				
		Friend															
		With a RAF Card	Without an RAF Card	Relative	ICDL/ Why IAT	IAT/ Schedule Ad	CHIPUKIZI	PRE-UNIVERSITY	DEGREE PROGRAMS	DIPLOMA PROGRAMS	CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS	UFUNGUO	Signposts & billboards	Posters	Website	Success Cards	Facebook
Jan	158	1	56	24	22	6		0	1	0	0	0	4	4	1	4	6
Feb	72	0	33	5	8	2	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	9
Mar	83	0	36	7	8	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	6	1	11
Apr	43	0	7		3	3	0	0	0	0	2	0					
Jun	67	0	16	12	5	0	2	2	0	0	0	0					
Jul	56	0	12	7	3	0	6	2	0	2	1	0					
Aug	45	0	8	6	1	0	0	1	0	1	2	0					
Sep	74	0	23		3		6	0	0	0	5	0					
Oct	45	0	15		0		4	1	0	0	0	0					
Nov	34	45	23	8	5	2	6	2	1	2	4	1		1	2	1	1
Dec	30	4	20	9	6	3	4	2	2	2	4	1	2	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	707	88	249	78	64	17	28	10	4	8	22	2	7	6	11	7	28

Table 2: summary of enquiries for the year 2011(source: IAT Yaya Database)

4.3.2 Customer care

While the main duty of a customer care is to interact with enquirers and students in terms of explaining to them the institution's product, issuing brochures and giving any other information that they would want to know about the organization, they also keep records of enquiries for follow-up as well as enrolment record.

Enrollment records for the last 5 years, taken from 2 IAT centers shown that the number of students enrolled in Yaya had been going down from 1104 in 2007 to 588 in 2011 while those for Westlands were increasing slightly. According to the interviewee from Yaya, the drop of numbers experienced was as a result of many challenges that Yaya branch faced, including abrupt change of managers in 2009, continuous power failure that forced students to move to other centers and the logistics that were going around moving the Centre to a new premise, which was achieved in 2012. Also, according to the interviewee the difference realized in terms of numbers between the two centers is not related to publicity because the strategies used cut across all centers but is due to the fact that Yaya occupied a small space which could not handle all the courses hence most of the students were referred to other centers. The trend for the two centers is shown below.
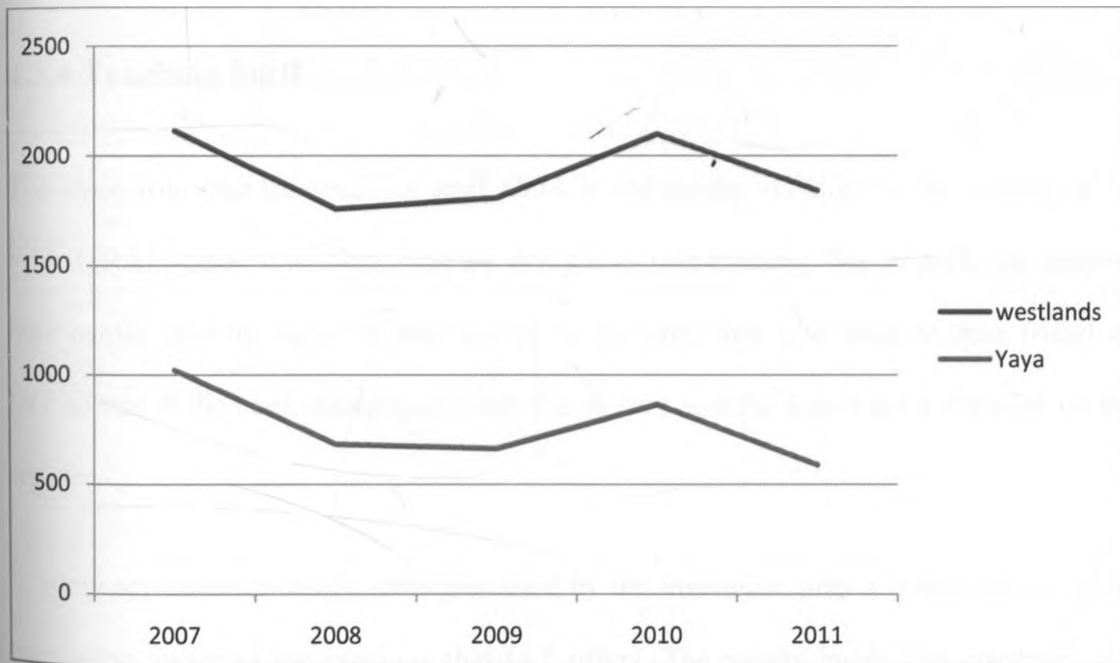
Figure 2: enrolment trends for Yaya and Westlands centers in the last 5 years (source: Yaya and Westlands databases)

4.3.3 Information Technology department

From an interview carried out with an IT representative the relationship between IT and marketing in any business organization is guided by the statement 'marketing structures drive IT and IT supports the structures. It is the role of marketing departments to come up with strategies they want to use to communicate their products, but the IT department will work with them to ensure that equipment are available and in good condition. For example when marketing people come up with brochures, posters, card and any other material or equipment that may be needed for communication, it is the role of IT people to make sure that printers, computers etc. are available and working properly to make work easier. They also update websites, manage servers, keep backups of data and update the servers regularly.

4.3.4 Teaching Staff

The main role that the teaching staff plays in enhancing visibility is the issuing of 'recommend a Friend (RAF) cards to students who are doing end- user training. The students are supposed to indicate their names and the name of their trainer on the card, then give them to their friend who are not in IAT so that if the card comes back, both the student and the friend get a discount on the course they register.

In summary communication strategies used by the institution play a major role in making the target population aware of the products that IAT offers. The results imply that communication through a word of mouth plays the bigger role towards bringing clients as compared to other methods. It can therefore be concluded that the method used to pass information about IAT and its product determines enrolment success.

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Section 2

4.4 Demographic Profile

A total of 50 students, 3 managers, 1 customer care representative and 1 staff member were used for the data gathering process of the study. The participants were students and staff at IAT. For the purpose of gathering pertinent and reliable data, respondents from 18 years old were used. Of the 50 students, the sample was divided equally according to four categories. These categories include the respondents' gender, age and level of education and occupation as shown in the tables below.

Gender	
Male	28
Female	22

Table 3 shows respondent's gender

Age	
18-21	29
22-25	11
26-30	5
31-35	1
36-40	3
Over 40	0

Table 4 shows the respondents age

Level of education	
O-level	24
Diploma	14
Undergraduate	12

Table5 shows the respondent's level of education

Occupation	
working	9
student	41

Table6 shows the respondent's occupation

As seen in the tables above, the respondents were equally divided according to the four categories as selected by the researcher. This is for the purpose of giving an equal representation of the respondents regarding the subject matter. Since the research could not afford for a much bigger sample due to time and budgetary constraints, the equal representation of respondents can represent the significant sample categories.

4.5 How they knew the organization

In order to assess how the participant knew about the organization, the researcher had a list of possible areas where one might have gotten the information about the organization. The areas listed were Newspaper advert, relative/friend, and IAT school presentation, sent an email, received a success card, open day, Timazi magazine, and inter-school essay competition. The respondents gave either one or two areas where they got the information as shown in the table below.

How did you know about IAT	
Newspaper advert	8
Relative/friend told me	27
IAT school presentation	2
Sent an email through website	1
Attended open day	5
Read Timazi magazine	0
Inter-school essay competition	1
Newspaper advert, relative/friend and open day	1
Relative/friend and newspaper advert	1
Relative/friend and school presentation	2
School presentation, success card, and Inter-school competition	1
Billboard at Westlands	1

Table7. Descriptive summary of how the 50 participants knew or heard about IAT

According to the information shown on the table above, the biggest number of participants said that they were told about the organization by a friend or a relative. A few out of them got it from the Newspaper advert and others attended an open day. Small numbers got to know about it though school presentations, billboards and IAT website while no one has ever read Timazi magazine.

4.6 Knowledge about IAT webpages

The researcher wanted to know whether the participants were aware of the IAT website. 86% said they are aware of the website while 14% were not aware about it. Out of the 43 that were aware, 7% visited the website frequently, 44% do it sometimes while the 49% said that they rarely visited the site. The pie chart s below gives a summary of the participant's response in percentages.

IAT website awareness

- 14%
- 86%
- yes
- No
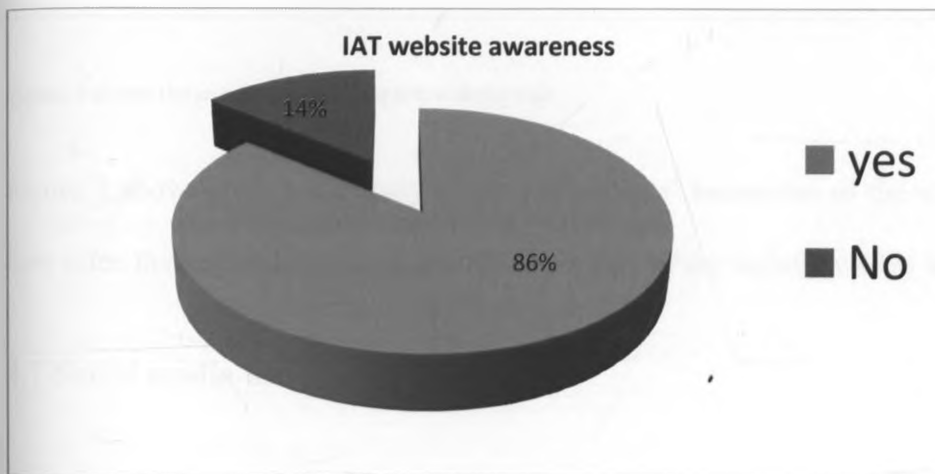
Figure 3 shows the respondent's website awareness

website visit

- sometimes
- frequently
- rarely

49% 44% 7%
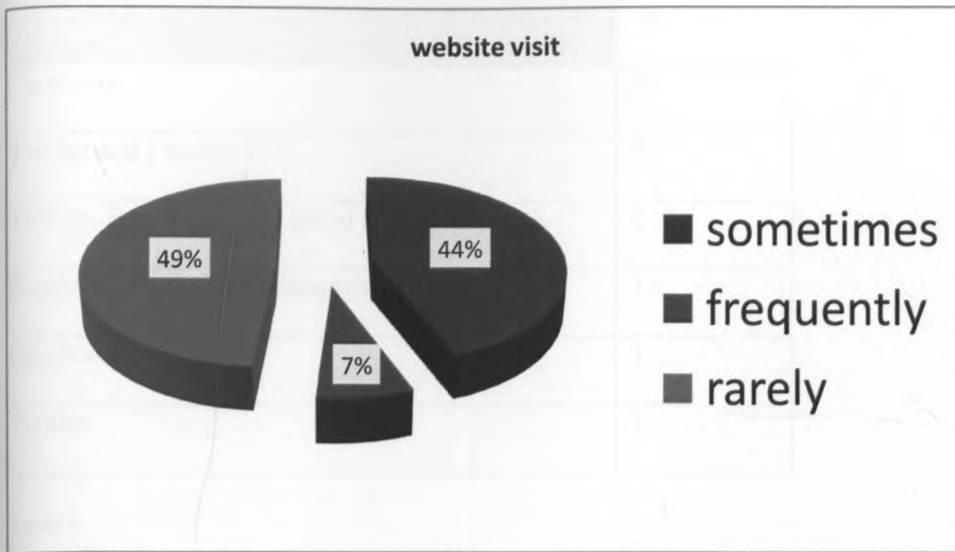
Figure 4 shows the percentages of people's website visit

Figure 3 above gives a summary of the respondents' awareness of the website while figure 4 shows how often the respondents who said they are aware of the website visited it.

4.7 Social media use

Data collected with regard to social media used shown that the all the respondents have access to Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn. However, the majority said that they frequently accessed Facebook while small numbers accessed twitter, LinkedIn and t the MINI campaigns Tubidy. The numbers are shown in the table below.

Facebook	34
Twitter and Facebook	9
Twitter, Facebook and Linked in	4
Facebook, twitter and Instagram	1
Facebook and Tubidy	1
Twitter	1

Table 8

Out of the 50 respondents, 68%have never accessed IAT from either of the social media pages they frequently accessed while 32% had accessed it on Facebook. The message that is commonly posted on Facebook is on Ufunguo scholarships, and IAT open days.

4.8 Why they chose IAT and willingness to recommend

When the respondent were asked why they chose to do their courses at IAT and not any other institution, 97% of the respondents said that they chose IAT because it is a recognized institution and it offers quality education. 3% said it is due to convenience, thus they would recommend their friends or relatives to take a course there since one gets value for their money, they have enough facilities, the staff is friendly, content is up to date and the learning environment is cool.

4.9 How visible is IAT

From the 50 questionnaires administered, 54% of the respondents said that IAT is doing enough to make itself visible while 46% were of the opinion that the institution is not doing enough. This made a

thin line between those who felt that enough was done and those who felt that more could be done. The summary of the percentages is shown in the pie chart below.

Visibility

46%   54%   ■ yes   ■ No
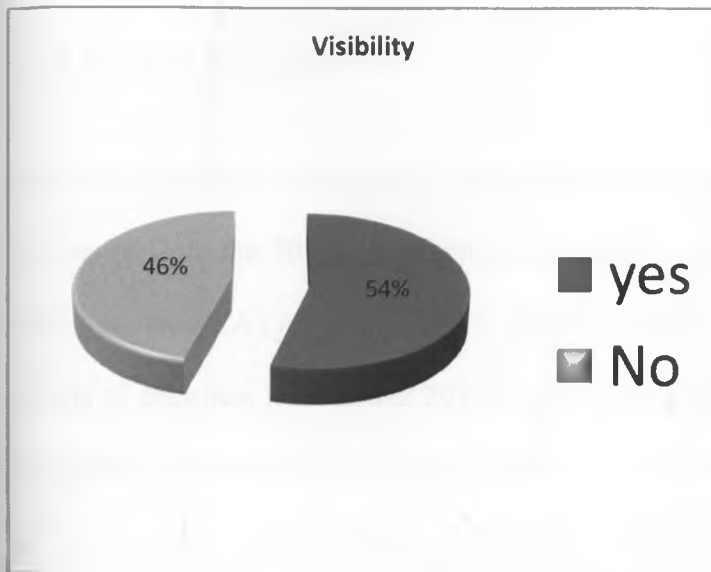
Figure 5 shows the percentages of people's opinions with regard to whether IAT is doing enough to make istself visible or not

Section 3

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.10 Effectiveness of the strategies

4.10.1 Word of mouth

Based on the results given above, it is clear that the most effective strategy is the word of mouth. This is because from the 50 questionnaires administered, slightly more than half (27) of the respondents were told about IAT by a friend or a relative. (Table7).   This was also true with the consolidated reports of enquiries for the year 2010 and 2011, in which numbers of those who got the information about the organization from friends or relatives in 2010 was 739 out of 1214 (60%) enquirers while in 2011 the numbers were 415 out of 707 (57%). This is contrary to the number of enquiries that knew of the organization from other strategies such as school presentations, posters, billboards, websites etc. whose numbers are close to negligible (Tables 1&2).

4.10.2 Daily Newspaper

The daily Newspaper was the second most effective strategy given by the respondents. Again, comparing the number of enquirers that knew about the organization from the newspaper in the year 2010 and 2011, it was clear that IAT was made visible in the paper. Looking at table 7, 8 students got the information from the newspaper which is 16% of the students. The same is depicted from tables 1&2 where 195/1214 (16.06%) got the information from the paper in 2010 while that of 2011 was 155/707 (21%). This means that despite the word of mouth being the most effective strategy, the Daily Newspaper is also effective.

4.10.3 School presentations, open days, posters, and billboards

The use of posters, billboard, open days and school presentations resulted to be the least effective communication strategies. This is because from the data collected through questionnaires, they had 1 to 5 students saying they knew about the institution through them. (Table7). Also from the enquiries of 2010 and 2011 (tables 1&2) these strategies had the least numbers.

4.10.4 Timazi Magazine

Timazi magazine is prepared for high school students. Whenever there is a school presentation or competitions, the magazines are distributed to the schools that are participating in the competitions. The magazine contains all the products offered at IAT defining clearly a career path that one can take at IAT after high school. However, in the data collected, none of the respondents said that they have ever read it. This means that the magazine is not visible or not to people and therefore it is not effective at all.

4.10.5 Websites and social media use

Results from yearly analysis show that IAT website is not commonly known. This is because out of the 50 students from which questionnaires were administered, only 7 who said that they were aware of the website. The rest of the people said they were not aware about it. This means that the website is not so much known to the people outside IAT and therefore it has not be effective in enhancing the organization's visibility.

Out of the social media pages that the researcher outlined to determine whether IAT used social media to advertise itself, the results shown that all the respondents had an access to at least one or two of the pages. 68% had access to Facebook while 18% said they accessed Facebook and LinkedIn. However,

out of the 34 that were on Facebook, only 32% have ever accessed IAT from it. From the interview carried out with the marketing manager regarding social media use, it is true that IAT advertised itself on Facebook. However, using Facebook has its own challenges since it is dependent on friendship requests and sometimes it is hard to tell who is on Facebook, limiting its effectiveness as a strategy. For those who are already there and have friends at IAT have been able to see the updates on the pages especially regarding Ufunguo scholarships and any other activity going on. This means that since most people have access to Facebook, the marketing department can use a different criterion to have information on the page rather than depending on friend's invitation only.

4.10.6 Use of technology

An interview carried out with the marketing representative revealed that while IAT has used some of the modern technologies such as Facebook and websites as communication strategies, there is more that is being done to include more technology. Some of the plans include:

Using Cellphone technology- This will include mobile websites that will give marketers an easy way of enquiring about their customers. The technology should also help in communication whereby enquires are able to send free SMSs and then the person in charge of communication calls back without the customer having to incur any cost. This will help in capturing those customers that may want to enquire about IAT courses and possible they have no means of doing it for whatever reason. There is also a plan of having a mocality website that will include online directories and yellow pages in which advertising can be sold.

4.10.7 Visibility

The way respondents perceived the manner in which IAT was making itself visible varied from respondent to respondent. In Figure 3 above, although a slightly greater percentage of respondents said that IAT is doing enough to make it visible, the results of the participants' responses seemed to be slightly well-distributed among the survey choices given. This is because, even those who felt that visibility is achieved, went ahead and recommended the use of other advertising techniques such as roadshows, television and radio adverts as well as involving more of social media where the majority are.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of findings

The study was conducted with aim of achieving the objective of establishing the effectiveness of communication strategies used to enhance visibility.

To achieve this objective analysis of data with regard to the respondents' response was done to determine the effectiveness of communication strategies used by the organization. The results of the two IAT centers from which the data was collected revealed that some strategies were more effective than others.

In the analysis of the results from the questionnaires administered, it was clear that the most effective strategy was word of mouth followed by the Daily newspaper advert. This was also true with the consolidated reports for the year 2010 and 2011, in which numbers of those who got the information about the organization from friends or relatives as well as from the newspaper was larger than the rest of the communication methods

With regard to visibility, though IAT has done a lot to make itself visible, more can be done using other strategies such as television, roadshows and radio advertising.

The use of social media and webpages to enhance visibility has not been very effective due the fact that the only social media site that is used is Facebook which is dependent on friends invitation and therefore one can only access IAT from the site if he or she is a friend to an IAT member, while not many people are aware of the website.

The research data (appendix C) shows increased number of registrations in the month of January for the five years in Yaya. The same trend is depicted by performance in Westlands branch (appendix D)

in which registration is high in January as compared to other months, which explains the differences in totals for the two centers shown in figure 2 above. From the trend established it can be concluded that as IAT continues with their communication strategies, more effort should be put towards the end of the year targeting the January intake.

5.2 Conclusion

The results of this study have clearly shown that the choice of strategies to use to pass information to the target audience in an organization determines the results. It is clear from the findings that some strategies are more effective than others and therefore Institute of advanced technology should not only focus more on those strategies that are effective but also discover new ways of making those that seem not visible accessible to a wider range of audience. In summary, the organization should seek to invest more in the marketing strategies in use. In so doing they will improve the visibility of the organization as a whole which will eventually lead to improved results.

5.3 Recommendations

1. There is need to device new communication strategies that are not used so as to verify whether they would bring in more results.

2. The already existing strategies that are working for the organization can be improved for better results. For example, The Daily newspapers seem to be the second best strategy for the organization to put in their resources.

3. There is need to consider improving on internet marketing especially the use social media more since most of target group are on social media on daily bases. The marketing department can consider creating groups on Facebook to include other people since Facebook groups are not limited to friend's invitations. The department should also consider using other social sites such as twitter and LinkedIn.

4. Awareness about the existing webpages should be created since most of the target population is widely using the internet on daily bases and yet they are not aware about it.

5.4 Limitation of the study

The period of the study witnessed an introduction of new strategies that were not used earlier which could have affected the results in different ways. For example, school presentations, success cards and Facebook introduced in the last two years.

The data used in this study was obtained from the organization's database and caution must be taken with limitations of such data.

The period covered for study was short, forcing the researcher to use data from only two IAT branches to represent the entire organization. Probably a different result would be realized if a study was done to cover the whole organization

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study only covered two branches of the institution. .Since IAT has several other branches inside and outside Nairobi, a similar study is recommended covering them.

Also, because the data analyzed covered only the last five years and the institution has been in existence for 20 years, a similar study should be carried out using different periods which could yield different results.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please tick where appropriate

1) Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2) Age: ☐ 18-21 ☐ 22-25 ☐ 26-30

☐ 31-35 ☐ 36-40 ☐ 40 and above

3) Level of Education: ☐ O-Level ☐ Diploma ☐ Undergraduate

4) Occupation: ☐ Working ☐ Student

☐ Other (specify)................................

PART B : VISIBILY

1) What course are you taking at IAT?

....

....

....

2) How did you know/hear about it? {Please tick all that apply}:

☐ Newspaper Advert: ☐ Relative/Friend told me:

☐ IAT School Presentation: ☐ Sent an Email through IAT Website:

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☐ I received a Success Card: ☐ I Attended an IAT Open Day:

☐ I Read TIMAZI Magazine: ☐ Inter-Schools Essay Competition:

☐ Other (Please specify)...........................

3) Why did you choose to do the course at IAT and not any other Institution?

....

....

....

4) Based on your experience at IAT, would you recommend IAT to your friends, colleagues or relatives? (Give a reason)

....

....

....

5) Are you aware of the IAT website?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

6) If yes, how often do you visit the website?

☐ Frequently   ☐ Sometimes   ☐ Rarely

7) Which of the below social media sites do you frequently access?

☐ Facebook   ☐ twitter   ☐ LinkedIn   ☐ other (specify).....................

8) Have you accessed IAT from either of the above sites?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

9) If yes, which one? (Give a reason)...

10) Is the IAT page on the social media frequently updated with new information?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

11) What kind of information is channeled through the social media page you have accessed

12) How is the information on the page useful or relevant to you as a student?

....

....

....

13) In your own opinion, is IAT doing enough to make itself visible to those who do not know about it? (Please explain)

....

....

....

14) If No what should they do to improve visibility?

....

....

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What activities have you been involving in to make people know about IAT

2. Do you have a way in which you can tell whether those activities are effective or not. If yes, how?

3. As a manager, what role do you play to ensure that people know about your center and your products?

4. Based on the fact that technology has been changing with time, have you considered including the new technologies as one of the strategies to reach your target customers?

5. As a manager how are you able to tell whether you are reaching your target customers successfully or not?

6. What would you recommend be done with those strategies that seem not to be as yielding as expected?

7. When a customer comes to enquire for a course, is there any information collected from him or her that relates to how they knew about the organization?

8. How frequently is the IAT webpage and social media pages updated?

9. How many followers does the social media pages have

10. What activities are included in the social media pages?

11. What challenges do you face in the process of planning for these strategies?

APPENDIX C

REGISTRATION RECORD FOR 5 YEARS (YAYA BRANCH)

	REGISTRATIONS				
MONTH	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
JAN	114	117	145	92	148
FEB	63	78	125	125	109
MAR	65	80	77	97	123
APR	37	51	45	81	93
MAY	52	64	50	72	65
JUN	48	68	59	95	75
JUL	59	70	47	80	115
AUG	30	36	22	55	63
SEP	37	37	25	67	77
OCT	29	35	31	50	76
NOV	41	32	25	38	70
DEC	13	14	12	11	63
TOTAL	588	682	663	863	1077

APPENDIX D

REGISTRATION RECORD FOR 5 YEARS (WESTLANDS BRANCH)

MONTH	REGISTRATIONS				
	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
JAN	174	167	170	153	145
FEB	134	104	160	132	120
MAR	108	120	132	96	135
APR	106	114	77	81	89
MAY	100	93	63	72	85
JUN	98	89	79	102	60
JUL	59	99	59	80	119
AUG	109	120	45	55	62
SEP	81	69	92	81	76
OCT	94	70	96	76	76
NOV	88	84	88	87	70
DEC	99	102	79	58	53
TOTAL	1250	1231	1140	1073	1090