

**THE EFFECT OF PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES ON COMPETITIVE
ADVANTAGE: A STUDY ON DISPOSABLE BABY DIAPERS DISTRIBUTORS
IN NAIROBI KENYA**

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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D61/72583/2012

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor:

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University Supervisor

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my wife Milka, children Amy and Lenny for their support, encouragement, and valued guidance and for providing an enabling environment that made me complete the research project successfully.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I most sincerely thank the almighty God for helping me to complete this project despite the various challenges that I faced in the course of doing it. I appreciate the tremendous input and professional guidance given to me by my supervisor Dr. Justus Munyoki

I also acknowledge and thank my wife and our dear children for their support and encouragement. Their patience while I was a way for long hours doing this study is commendable.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the effect of promotional strategies on competitive advantage of baby diapers distributors in Nairobi. A descriptive research design was used to establish the effect of promotional strategies on competitive advantage of baby diapers distributors in Nairobi. The target population was 21 diapers distributors in Nairobi. Given the relatively small number, a census sampling was conducted. Primary data was collected by means of semi structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviation and frequency was used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that radio advertising affect the competitiveness of distributors moderately. Local radio attracts an audience that wants to keep up with local news, events and personalities. The study agreed that billboard advertising affect the competitiveness of baby diapers distributors because billboard advertising grabs the attention of potential customers like no other form of advertising can. Creative, colorful, and eye catching advertisements have more impact on brand awareness and strong name recognition. The results also indicated that respondents strongly agree that personal selling affects diapers distributor's competitiveness. The study revealed that majority of baby diapers distributors strongly agree that sales promotion affects distributor's competitiveness. Promotional strategies have a negative impact on distributor's competitive advantage especially where product delivery is poor, poor product quality, mismanagement and poor handling of customer complains. The study also found a positive impact on TV advertisement, radio, billboard, sales promotion and personal selling since they increase value to the basic products of distributors. The level of product quality rendered to the public by some distributors does not represent value for money paid due to poor materials. Furthermore, most distributors have poor customer relationship and poor communication skills. This study found that baby diapers distributors should incorporate social media as promotional strategy towards achieving the overall competitive advantage. It was therefore recommended that there should be a policy that baby diapers advertise through the social media. The respondents approached were reluctant in giving information fearing the confidentiality and sensitivity of the study. This was as a major limitation since many respondents had high level of suspicions and lack of trust where they thought the study aimed to use the findings against their job undertakings. Future studies should also set aside adequate time to conduct interviews and search the secondary sources of data available at the diapers distributors.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

In the early days of promotional campaigns, when there was often a short supply of many items, most advertisements were designed to inform the public of a product's availability (Rajagopal, 2007). Today, a major portion of promotional activities in the world is still informational. Firms are continuously striving for ways to attain a sustainable competitive advantage (Boone, 2006). Marketers often develop a promotional strategy to differentiate their goods or services in terms of their attributes, price, quality, or usage from those of competitors. Kurtz, (2010) found that promotion is the business of communicating with customers. It provides information that assists them in making a decision to purchase a product or service. Successful promotion increases sales so that the costs are spread over a larger output.

Promotion involves the pulling together of a range of techniques, in the most cost effective way you can, to initiate, increase and maintain awareness of what you offer to your customers. Promotion is one of the marketing mix elements, and a term used frequently in marketing. It consists of elements such as personal selling, advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and publicity to form a promotional mix, (Smith and Taylor, 2004). A promotional mix specifies how much attention to pay to each of the five elements and how much money to budget for each. A promotional plan can have a wide range of objectives, including: sales increases, new product acceptance, creation of brand

equity, positioning, competitive retaliations, or creation of a corporate image. Promotional strategy is the choice of a target market and formulation of the most appropriate promotion mix to influence it.

The first disposable baby diaper was made after the Second World War. Its technology has since gone through many changes which have resulted to their increased popularity especially following the introduction of Super Absorbent Polymers in diapers in the mid-80's (Juliet and Nikki, 2012). A disposable diaper is composed of the inner permeable layer or the top sheet, the Waterproof Outer Shell and an absorbent core with Super Absorbent Polymer (SAP) to soak up and trap fluid between the two sheets of nonwoven fabric. The modern diapers are highly standardized. They are not only functional, but include advanced features such as special fitting, gender identification coloring, and wet indicators.

1.1.1 The Concept of Promotional Strategies

Promotion is one of the key factors in the marketing mix and has a key role in market success. It is used to ensure that customers are aware of the products that the organization is offering. The promotional strategy is the blending of the different tools (channels) that can be used to communicate the promotional message to the customers. The channels to be used are; advertising, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, personal selling, sponsorship and sales promotion, (Keller, 2008).

The need for promotion arises from the intensity of competition. Sellers must somehow attract customers' attention. Information may take the form of advertising the availability of something, incentives are offered in the form of discounts, and emotional appeals are made by displays and, of course, by the low price itself (Boone, 2006).

According to Blattberg, (1990) promotional activities are meant to communicate & persuade the target market to buy the company's products. The firm chooses the product to meet the identified need of the target segment. The right distribution channel is used to make the product available and the firm undertakes attention-getting promotion. Keller, (2008) noted that marketing and sales management promotional events with long-term goals could build brand equity through offering actual product experience that helps to create strong, favorable, and unique associations. According to the journal of Advertising, Anderson *et al.*, (1992), intangible assets provide the most sustainable source of competitive advantage. Boone, (2006) stated that marketing communication is a critical aspect of companies overall marketing missions and a major determinant of their successes or failures.

Businesses today are continually looking for ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their operations. Coming under increasing pressure and scrutiny are promotional expenditures, viz., advertising, personal selling, public relations, and sales promotions because they have long been among the most challenging marketing costs to analyze or justify on a profit versus cost basis (Anderson, 1992). The argument of Srinivasan and Anderson, (1998) stated that marketers are compelled to choose between increasing their spending on the promotional mix or giving in to the pressure by top

management of cutting costs on promotion to increase profits. Marketing managers are under intense pressure to rethink their promotional strategies. They must therefore develop and implement promotional programs that can add value to their business firms within the constraints of tighter budgets.

1.1.2 The Concept of Competitive Advantage

A company has a competitive advantage whenever it has an edge over its rivals making it superior in generating greater sales or margins, securing customers and defending against competitive forces. Anderson, (1992) argued that a competitive advantage is gained by offering consumers greater value, either by means of lower prices or by providing greater benefits and service that justify higher prices. On the other hand, Kariuki, (2012) suggested that competitive advantage is born out of core competencies that yield long term benefits to the company. It is considered as the unique attributes and elements that an organization has over its rivals giving the business the ability to generate greater value to the firm and its shareholders over time. It can be defined as the ability of a firm to utilize its services to create value and differentiate itself against competitors and to meet current rising customer needs through provision of quality effective and efficient services creating strong barriers against imitation.

Porter, (1980) suggested four generic business strategies that could be adopted in order to gain competitive advantage. The strategies relate to the extent upon which a business has a cost leadership, the scope of a business' activities are narrow versus broad and the extent to which a business seeks to differentiate its products. Competitive advantage is at the heart of a firm's performance in competitive markets and thus, competitive advantage

means having low costs, differentiation advantage, or a successful focus strategy. Furthermore, Porter argues that competitive advantage grows fundamentally out of value a firm is able to create for its buyers that exceeds the firm's cost of creating it. On his part Kay, (1993) stated that 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 such things as access to natural resources, inexpensive power, new technologies or access to highly trained and skilled human resources. When a firm sustains profits that exceed the average for its industry, the firm is said to possess a competitive advantage over its rivals. The goal of much of business strategy is to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage (Cummins, 2002).

A competitive advantage exists when the firm is able to deliver the same benefits as competitors but at a lower cost (cost advantage), or deliver benefits that exceed those of competing products. Thus, a competitive advantage enables the firm to create superior value for its customers and superior profits for itself. Competitive advantage is essentially a position of superiority on the part of the firm in relation to its competition in any of the multitude of functions/activities performed by the firm. It means that a firm can gain a competitive advantage in several ways. Some firms may be superior in production, some in R & D and some others in marketing (Cummins, 2002). And within given function, the superiority may be rooted in different aspects of the function. Competitive advantage is thus superior or distinctive competence of the firm relative to competition in some area. The superior or distinctive competence must mean something in terms of customer value. The superiority or distinction may also cover the resource and capability dimension and factors like technology, (Dierickx and Cool, 1989).

1.1.3 The Baby Care Industry

According to Martha, McCain and Margaret (2008), the baby care product market growth is largely fueled by the growing baby population in developing nations, where the disposable income of parents have also increased considerably at the same time. Moreover, the average age of parents across the globe has also increased in past few years. Higher aged parents are considered to be financially more stable and hence have more money to spend on their baby's care and convenience. In addition, growing number of women entering into mainstream workforce has helped the baby care market to grow, as the average disposable income of the family has grown. Baby care market has also witnessed a growing trend in baby specific products, especially baby cosmetics, which are organic in terms of ingredients used and poses no threat to baby's health.

The global baby care product market continues to go through changes, with companies diversifying their product portfolios to offer ever-increasing product ranges. Traditionally limited to everyday products such as diapers and baby powders, today's baby care industry offers a wider range of product lines such as cradle cap treatments and massage oils. Companies are also building on the basic essentials of creams and powders to extend product ranges through added extras like scented hypoallergenic baby powder with aloe Vera (Errol, Oberman and Yirmiya, 2000).

The industry must continue increasing marketing budgets to combat bad publicity, which can put a dent in product sales such as the blow to the formula market caused by reports of melamine contaminated milk products. Such scares damage consumer confidence and

company credibility, necessitating strong publicity campaigning as a remedy. Government involvement in manufacturing practices is also likely to increase, meaning that companies will have to comply with standards set in place to help protect consumers.

Demand has grown due to a rising number of babies to be catered to, partly because people are starting families later. Product innovation and development has allowed retailers and manufactures to widen the market, using new technologies and advanced marketing approaches. Research from firm Key Note points to the contribution of changing lifestyle trends to the market, including mothers returning to work earlier giving rise to greater demand for breastfeeding equipment such as sterilizers and pumps. The market segment comprised of baby safety equipment has benefited from recent changes in social attitudes towards childrearing and government legislation regarding child safety in child minders' homes. Baby monitors locks, and stair gates are recording particularly strong sales. Baby foods and infant formula products fare well in economic downturns as an essential rather than luxury product category. Parents are increasingly educated, with higher levels of disposable income, and greater awareness of health issues. This leads to greater demand for nutrient dense products, leading companies to focus on product quality, marketing and innovation. Specialized, fortified and soy-milk based formulas are recording increasingly strong sales (Martha, McCain and Margaret, 2008).

1.1.4 The Disposable Baby Diapers

A diaper is a kind of underwear that allows one to defecate or urinate in a discreet manner. Larkin and Patrick (2006) noted that diapers are primarily worn by children who are not yet potty trained or experience bedwetting. However, they can also be used by

adults with incontinence or in certain circumstances where access to a toilet is unavailable. These can include the elderly, those with a physical or mental disability, and people working in extreme conditions such as astronauts. Disposable diapers were developed by Marion Donovan after World War II because of a cotton shortage. It wasn't long, however, before mothers realized the practical benefits of Donovan's 1950 diaper design: a rectangular plastic covering (initially from shower curtains) over layers of tissue paper (Juliet and Nikki, 2012).

Cloth diapers have the advantage of being soft, comfortable, and are made of natural materials. However they have a relatively poor absorbency and have to be laundered. Disposable diapers were developed as an alternative to cloth diapers in order to overcome these problems. The earliest disposables used wood pulp fluff, cellulose wadding, fluff cellulose, or cotton fibers as the absorbent material. These materials did not absorb very much moisture; consequently diapers made from these materials were extremely bulky. More efficient absorbent polymers were developed to address this issue. Modern disposable baby diapers as observed by Larkin and Patrick, (2006) have highly advanced features such as special sizing and coloring for specific gender and age, and color change indicators to show when the child is wet. They have a layered construction, which consists of an absorbent pad sandwiched between two sheets of nonwoven fabric. The pad is specially designed to absorb and retain body fluids, and the nonwoven fabric gives the diaper a comfortable shape and helps prevent leakage.

Juliet and Nikki, (2012) noted that whereas disposable diapers have become a great convenience in the modern world, many parents question the safety of the materials that constitute them. Manufacturers are increasingly aware of parents concerns about toxic materials such as chlorine, dyes, fragrances, phthalates, and more, and thus many will list on their website and/or packaging what potentially harmful chemicals are not included. Larkin and Patrick, (2006) questioned the biodegradability of disposable diapers. Most recently, diaper manufacturers have responded to environmental and health concerns raised by many parents. There is a trend toward greener and more biodegradable disposable diapers, which is viewed as a step in the right direction. However, according to Juliet and Nikki, (2012) parents are not out of the woods yet, and depending on which brand of diaper one chooses, the risks and impacts may vary.

Kenya has witnessed a steady rise in demand for disposable diapers in the recent years. About ten years ago, disposable diaper brands were fewer and were meant for the high-end market. Despite their low cost then, they were still out of reach. Most mothers used washable nappies. Today, however, the use of disposable diapers has increased significantly. Most of the salaried people can afford to buy disposable diapers and the use is no longer a preserve of the well-to-do families. For the modern mother busy balancing her career, family and education, the disposable diapers presents an easier option. The high demand for disposable diapers has seen a proliferation of numerous brands in the market resulting to intensified price wars. Prices have also increased despite the competition. This increase has been driven by intensive marketing campaigns on the benefits of the disposable diapers by various manufacturing companies.

In Nairobi, there are over 20 brands in the market as well as cheap imports, some of the products are Bouncy, a locally manufactured diaper by Inter- Consumer; Pampers by P&G; Haggies by Kimberly Clark; Bebedou by Beau Bebe and Happy Baby by Sundries Bargains. Other brands include: Fitti, Toto, Baby Love, Marvel Baby, Sunny Baby, and Sweet & Happy Baby. As manufacturers strive to gain from the growing sector, imitations are flocking the market as others like makers of Samper diapers hope to ride on the Pampers goodwill and success by incorporating P&G packaging and colors. Given the stiff competition in the market, companies like P&G have reinvented their diapers. P&G has a new brand, Pampers Magic, which is said to be the thinnest diaper in the market, but highly absorbent to guarantee dryness for longer. According to a leading retailer, the market penetration of the diapers has led to a sharp drop in sale of cloth nappies. The retailer further indicated that modern mothers do not want the hassle of washing dirt. Disposable diapers are therefore more convenient, especially during the night and while travelling or even during the rainy season.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problems with and cost of disposing of single use diapers as noted by Larkin and Patrick, (2006) is so high that some governments subsidize families help cover the cost of buying and laundering cloth diapers. So it appears that while both cloth and disposable diapers have an impact on the environment in the ways they are made, transported, disposed of and/or laundered, the damage from cloth diapers is smaller than that of disposable diapers. Imported disposable baby diapers are V.A.T exempted according to the V.A.T Act Cap 476 of the Kenya law. This has resulted to proliferation of imported

disposable baby diapers that are positioned as “good enough” brands which retail at lower prices.

The ever increasing consumers’ awareness of the potential danger posed by the toxic materials that constitute the disposable diapers has created a trend towards greener and more biodegradable disposable diapers in the developed countries. With such challenges, the competitive advantage of disposable baby diapers distributors in developed countries may not match that of competitors in a developing country such as Kenya. This and the challenges earlier mentioned may complicate the desire by the disposable baby diapers distributors to create competitive advantage for their products (Mwangi, 2008).

Promotional strategies analyze the importance of communication and cohesion with all the interests aimed at enhancing competitive advantage and strengthening the corporate image while adding value to the corporate brand and increasing their profitability. This is achieved by using reputation as a benchmark to differentiate, adding value, cost leadership and focusing on a specific niche market within the industry. Disposable baby diapers increasingly seek to gain competitiveness by using various promotional strategies that differentiate them within the industry. The competitive advantage highlighted above offer unique condition to each diaper or rather something valuable to the client beyond simply offering price (Cummins, 2002).

Several studies on promotional strategies have been carried out by various people. For instance Kinyua, (2000) carried out a survey on promotional practices offered by selected dairy firms quoted in Nairobi security exchange and found that advertising improves

firm's awareness. On the other hand Serem, (2003) did a survey of personal selling by telecommunication industry in Nairobi and concluded that it increases company sales. Additionally Munge, (2005) conducted a study on the influence of promotion on sales in dairy industry. He found that promotion can increase company sales, but others suggested that promotion decreases company revenue. On his part Mwangi, (2008) carried a study on factors affecting promotion practices on customer retention. He noted that the aim of a firm carrying out promotion practices is obviously to retain its customers, however even if the firm takes some promotional practices then the incomes of the company rises at a later stage due to this practice. It is evident that these studies did not focus on the effect of promotional strategies on competitive advantage thus creating a knowledge gap. Therefore there was need to bridge this gap by carrying out a study on the disposable baby diapers distributors in Nairobi Kenya to establish the effect of promotional strategies on competitive advantage.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

These were the objectives of this study.

- i. To establish the extent to which promotional strategies affect competitive advantage of disposable baby diapers distributors in Nairobi.
- ii. To establish the relationship between promotional strategies and competitive advantage of disposable baby diapers distributors in Nairobi

1.4 Value of the Study

This study was intended to help disposable baby diapers distributors' management understand better how promotional strategies affect competitive advantage. The study updated the companies on the current issues that contribute to the existing gap. The findings of the study were to be used by the companies as a benchmark in setting standards for competitive advantage.

The research enlightened other stakeholders on the effects of promotional strategies on competitive advantage, creating in them awareness and the interest of ensuring stability of their respective institutions. The study stood to benefit future researchers, scholars and academicians wishing to study promotional strategies in related issues. They could make this study a source for their reference.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature relevant to the topic of this study. It covers a review of promotional mix elements of interest which are advertising, sales promotion personal selling public relations and social media.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

Promotional strategy comprises a range of tactical marketing techniques designed within a strategic marketing framework to add value to a product or service in order to achieve specific sales and marketing objective. Sales promotion entails giving something extra to a customer as a reward for their behavior on a particular purchasing occasion (Young and Aitken, 2007). There are several theories which support the concept of reward as a motivator. The conditions of sales promotion are based on classical and operant conditioning theories. Whereas classical conditioning theory is largely associated with advertising operant conditioning theory is seen as an explanation for consumer behavior in relation to sales promotion. Operant conditioning suggests the response of the individual is likely to be affected by positive reinforcement (reward) or negative reinforcement (punishment), although the affect is likely to cease when these reinforcements are taken away.

Baines and Fill, (2008) said that the law of effect, which had to do with positive and negative consequences of actions, is also relevant to sales promotion. The law states that the consequences of behavior now will govern the consequences of that behavior in the

future. In other words once a buying pattern is achieved it will continue into the future. Sales Promotion Theory is the study of increasing short-term sales revenue. This study can be conducted readily and effectively as the results can be measured quickly and, because of the narrow focus of the promotion, other factors can be tightly controlled. Sales promotions are a source of some debate; Kotler and Armstrong, (2006) argue that increasing short term sales does not lead to long-term profitability. Others argue that the benefits of creating more income for the company in the short term allows that company to more rapidly grow to gain a larger market share. While promotions come in many different forms, most fall into three categories. Push, Pull and Combination.

According to Bunn and Banks, (2004) a major contributing theory to sales promotions strategies is that consumers tend to be highly price sensitive for certain product categories. In these generally undifferentiated industries, offering a temporary reduction in price or increase in services for the same price can allow companies to gain market share from their competitors for a short time. Consumer psychology plays a major role in every aspect of marketing, and promotions are no exception. Once an individual develops a pattern of behavior, that pattern can be difficult to break, even if circumstances slightly change. Sales promotions capitalize on this theory by encouraging purchase habits for a short time in the hopes that consumers will continue to purchase their brand even when the promotion has ended (Besanko, Dranove and Shanley, 2000).

This tactic can be highly effective when you offer a product that is truly superior to competitors' offerings at a similar price. Sales theory is about the relationship between the sales force and the product itself. This means that the sales staff must be

knowledgeable about the product, which means the product; sales and promotion are integrated on the sales floor. Sales is largely the process of turning demand into profit, or alternatively, turning purchasing power into demand. If there is a closely competitive market in products that are very similar then price becomes the only real distinction. It is also the place where sales theory and practice converge; it is where the perceived benefits of the product and its price come together in the actual sale. In other words, it's not just about selling products and making money, but about building relationships based on trust, loyalty and mutual benefit (Baines and Fill, 2008).

2.3 Promotional Mix Elements

Promotion is one of the key factors in the marketing mix and has a key role in market success. It is used to ensure that customers are aware of the products that the organization is offering. The promotional mix is the blending of the different tools that can be used to communicate the promotional message to the customers. These tools include; advertising, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, personal selling, sponsorship and sales promotion, (Rowley, 1998). The decision concerning the extent of standardization or adaptation of communication policy strategies is a question of trade-off between cost and impact, i.e. of cost savings vs. higher effectiveness. An effective promotional mix is determined by proper choice of the audience; its needs, language and culture; promotional competitive and economic objectives; media and legislation. This study focuses on sales promotion and advertisement and their effect to competitive advantage.

2.3.1 Sales Promotion

Sales promotion is the part of the marketing communication that supports other parts by encouraging selling and buying processes. Bunn and Banks, (2004) define promotions as “a range of tactical marketing techniques designed within a strategic framework to add value in order to achieve specific sales and marketing objectives”. It usually works closely with advertising. American Marketing Association includes into sales promotion all of the below the line advertising (direct advertising, exhibitions, store advertising and sponsorship). The difference between advertising and sales promotion is that whereas advertising offers reason to buy, sales promotion offers reason to buy it now (Fill, 1999). The target group for sales promotion usually includes dealers, company’s own sales force and customers. The aim is to increase their desire and ability to promote sales. Sales promotion aspires to fasten selling process in order to encourage customers to instant purchases.

According to Gakira, (2012) there are two types of sales promotion; monetary and non monetary. These two types of sales promotion are separated and categorized by their significant differences: Monetary sales promotion are transactional and recognized for providing immediate rewards to the customer, e.g. discounts, coupons, rebates and price packs; non monetary sales promotion are recognized for providing delayed rewards and being relationship-based, e.g. sweepstakes, free gifts and loyalty programs. On their part Blattberg and Neslin, (1990) categorized sales promotions into consumer promotion and trade promotion. Consumer promotions can either be offered by the retailer in the form of a price cut, feature or display, or by the manufacturer in the form of couponing or special

packs (Kay, 1993). The trade promotions are offered by the manufacturer to the retailer. Giving free or sample goods for resellers is also an effective sales promotion tool. When directing the sales promotion towards industrial customers in order to stimulate purchases and to motivate salespeople, the focus must be on conventions, trade shows and sales contests, (Kotler, 2006). All businesses need to communicate to the customer what they have to offer, (Manar, Sabah and Alrubaiee, 2012).

Generally sales promotion according to Raghurir, Priya, Jeffrey, and Grande, (2006) works on a direct behavioral basis rather than effecting awareness or attitude. It is continuously said that most types of sales promotions affect the decision-making and purchasing stages of the buying-process directly. Compared with other tactics sales promotion has less long-term effectiveness, this means that that sales promotion generally has less long term effects and creates more immediate results. The extensive use of sales promotion has led to considerable debates concerning whether or not it is effective. Critics argue that sales promotion is ineffective in the long run and leads to loss in market share since it makes the consumers promotion prone. Other researchers have shown the opposite; that sales promotion is effective in the long-run since it leads to increased sales and profit, (Smith, Berry, and Pulford, 2006). A grand sale that clears out the inventory but, with added advertising costs factored in, reduces margin is a failure. Sales promotions therefore must be carefully calibrated to achieve the purpose. Holding promotions too frequently will habituate customers to buy only when promotions are in effect. Avoiding promotions altogether will let competitors draw customers away.

Siegel, (2004) stated that to assess the profitability of retailer promotions, retailers have to take into account their costs, the trade promotion allowances given to them, and the effect of promotions on sales to consumers. Sales promotion tools for consumer promotion include cash refund offers, prices off, prizes, patronage rewards etc. Sales promotion tools for trade promotion include prices off, advertising and display allowances and free goods based on sales. Sales promotion tools aimed at salesmen of the company are contests, incentives for sales in fixed periods, trips to tourist locations etc.

Free samples stimulate consumer trial and some of the consumers may feel good and start purchasing. A free advisory in any activity may help some persons and they may come to the advisory firm in future. A sales promotion incentive may increase the usage rate by occasional users and attract new tries. Incentives could be used as rewards to loyal customers also. Incentive type promotions are used to attract new buyers or triers, to reward loyal customers, and to increase the repurchase rates of occasional users (Cummins, Julian, and Mullin, 2002). The need for promotion arises from the intensity of competition. Sellers must somehow attract customers' attention. Information may take the form of advertising the availability of something, incentives are offered in the form of discounts, and emotional appeals are made by displays and, of course, by the low price itself (Boone, 2006). Precisely because sales promotions must provide incentives whether to the distribution channel, the company's own sales people, or to the consumer, they cost money by definition and must produce additional volume to pay for the expenditures. Munge, (2005) conducted a study on the influence of promotion on sales in dairy industry. In his study he found that promotion can increase company sales, but others suggested that promotion decreases company revenue. On the other hand the study by

Mwangi, (2008) on factors affecting promotion practices on customer retention found that the firms carrying out promotion practices obviously do so to retain their customers; however their incomes may rise at a later stage due to this practice.

2.3.2 Advertising

Advertising is any paid, impersonal communication focused simultaneously on a big audience conveyed by mass medium or other channels (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). International advertising rules define that an advertisement must be recognized as an advertisement. In print media, for instance, an audience must be able to understand when something is about marketing.

Advertising is impersonal communication and there is no personal contact between information receiver and sender. Therefore, there must be a channel, or media, which conveys the message to the receiver. This channel can be a television, a radio, an Internet, a magazine or any kind of billboard for instance. The message can also be conveyed directly through text message or e-mail (Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). Overall, the main purpose of advertising is to affect on audience's opinion and increase awareness of the product. The channel used depends on the desired effect of the message and the selected audience. The most common channel in the world was, according to Smith, Berry and Pulford, (2006) print advertising in magazines. Many customers get to know about the products through advertisements. They are seen everywhere; in the morning on newspapers, in the evening on television. At noon, they are heard from the radio and read from the Internet. Advertising is also the most visual and designed method of communication compared to other parts of marketing communications, (Siegel, 2004).

Although marketing is usually carried out by businesses for financial purposes, it is widely used by non-profit organizations and social agencies in order to make people aware of their causes. Advertising is an effective way to inform and persuade target groups. Advertising is a very popular way of pursuing marketing. The advert must be conveyed to the target audience by a suitable medium. When selecting the media, one of the most important characteristic is the cost. There are two types of costs, absolute and relative costs. Absolute costs are the time and space expenses. Relative costs are the costs of contacting each member of the target audience. Therefore television, for example, has high absolute cost but because the message is delivered to a large number of people, its relative cost is very low. (Fill, 1999).

According to Taylor and Derek (2001), although advertising uses mediums and platforms to sell, inform, shape opinion etc, an audience normally picks and chooses what media content to absorb. Audiences do not generally pick what adverts to expose them to. Therefore advertisers buy media space to break up the media content whether this is banner adverts on a blog, television adverts or prints campaigns. Advertising also uses a number of other available platforms, not necessarily associated with media content, e.g. bus stops, tube posters etc. However, by placing adverts in certain places (integrated campaigns, ambient, events); they raise awareness of brands, which are then featured in media content (Smith and Taylor, 2004).

Advertising fits into the media landscape by using platforms and outlets for advertising. As the media landscape has gone largely digital in the past decade or so, advertising has adapted to this by using online, digital and integrated campaigns for effective marketing

(Raghubir, Prays, Jeffrey and Grande, 2006). Advertising has explicitly used every possible platform, making the media landscape full of adverts. By buying media space, adverts are pushed into the public realm, using the rich media landscape.

2.3.3 Personal Selling

Personal selling is a method in which salesperson uses their skills and techniques for making personal relationships with the customer. According to Kotler, (1980), Personal Selling is an oral presentation in a conversation with one or more prospective purchaser for the purpose of making sales. Personal selling involves personal contact, face-to-face meetings or through a telephone conversation, Internet including using video conferencing or text messaging. Personal selling is a selling technique involved between person to person and between the prospective buyer and seller. Personal selling consists of human contact and direct communication rather than impersonal mass communication. Personal selling involves developing customer's relationship, discovering & communicating customer needs, matching the appropriate products with these needs.

Selling, the art of persuasion is a one on one interaction whereby a tangible or intangible item of value is exchanged for a different item, usually with money in an amount of equal or greater value of the item being sold. Personal selling is part of the promotional mix. To be successful in personal sales, the salesperson must understand how to sell to the needs of a customer. Psychologist Abraham Maslow created a Hierarchy of Needs that offers useful information for personal selling. Maslow outlined five levels of need and as each level is fulfilled, a person progresses to the next one. At the most basic level, physiological and safety needs must be met with food, clothing, and shelter, so a product

that meets these basic needs has potential to sell well. However, the basic human need to consume food and liquids should not be confused with wanting a hamburger and a soft drink (Greening and Jack, 2003).

According to Rustenburg, Gerbrand and Arnold (2012), buying and selling are understood to be two sides of the same "coin" or transaction. Both seller and buyer engage in a process of negotiation to consummate the exchange of values. The exchange, or selling, process has implied rules and identifiable stages. It is implied that the selling process will proceed fairly and ethically so that the parties end up nearly equally rewarded. The stages of selling, and buying, involve getting acquainted, assessing each party's need for the other's item of value, and determining if the values to be exchanged are equivalent or nearly so, or, in buyer's terms, "worth the price."

Effective selling requires a systems approach, at minimum involving roles that sell, enable selling, and develop sales capabilities. Selling also involves salespeople who possess a specific set of sales skills and the knowledge required to facilitate the exchange of value between buyers and sellers that is unique. Team selling has grown to become one of the most common ways to influence sales (Roseann; Gregory and Stanton, 2008). Team selling is a group of people representing the sales department and other functional areas in the firm, such as finance, production, and research and development. Team selling is not always the best choice in all situations. Team Selling can be expensive and should be used when there is a chance for high sales and profit. Companies will need to weigh the pros and cons of the situation and base their decision on whether the approach will match the needs of the buyer. If team selling is executed correctly it can offer

advantages such as customers sometimes like a company which uses team selling because if they have a concern or problem they have two salespeople they can contact to address their concern or problem.

2.3.4 Public Relations

Public relations (PR) are the practice of managing the spread of information between an individual or an organization and the public (Seitel and Fraser, 2007). Public relations may include an organization or individual gaining exposure to their audiences using topics of public interest and news items that do not require direct payment. The aim of public relations by a company often is to persuade the public, investors, partners, employees, and other stakeholders to maintain a certain point of view about it, its leadership, products, or of political decisions. Common activities include speaking at conferences, winning industry awards, working with the press, and employee communication. Public relations professionals present the public face of an organization or individual, usually to articulate its objectives and official views on issues of relevance, primarily to the media.

Public relations contribute to the way an organization is perceived by influencing the media and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. According to Phillips (2006), public relations professionals can be viewed as discourse workers specializing in communication and the presentation of argument and employing rhetorical strategies to achieve managerial aims. Furthermore a fundamental technique used in public relations is to identify the target audience, and to tailor messages to appeal to each audience.

Sometimes the interests of differing audiences and stakeholders common to a public relations effort necessitate the creation of several distinct but complementary messages. On the other hand stakeholders theory identifies people who have a stake in a given institution or issue. All audiences are stakeholders, but not all stakeholders are audiences (Kamau, 2009).

2.3.5 Social Media Related Promotional Strategies

According to Trattner and Kappe, (2013), social media marketing refers to the process of gaining traffic or attention through social media sites. For instance, Twitter is a social site designed to let people share short messages or updates with others. Face book, in contrast is a full blown social networking site that allows for sharing updates, photos, joining events and a variety of other activities. Social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media.

Social media is a platform that is easily accessible to anyone with internet access. Increased communication for organizations fosters brand awareness and often, improved customer service. Additionally, social media serves as a relatively inexpensive platform for organizations to implement marketing campaigns. Social networking websites allow individuals to interact with one another and build relationships (Schivinski, Bruno and Dąbrowski, 2013). When companies join the social channels, consumers can interact with

them and the interaction feels personal. Companies can interact with individual followers through social networking sites. This personal interaction can instill a feeling of loyalty into followers and potential customers.

Twitter allows companies to promote their products on an individual level. The use of a product can be explained in short messages that followers are more likely to read. These messages appear on followers' home pages. Messages can link to the product's website, Face book profile, photos, videos, etc. This link provides followers the opportunity to spend more time interacting with the product online. This interaction can create a loyal connection between product and individual and can also lead to larger advertising opportunities. Twitter promotes a product in real time and brings customers in (Assaad, Waad, Gomez, 2013).

Furthermore Evans and Dave, (2010) indicated that face book profiles are far more detailed than Twitter accounts; they allow a product to provide videos, photos, and longer descriptions. Videos can show when a product can be used as well as how to use it. These also can include testimonials as other followers can comment on the product pages for others to see. Face book can link back to the product's Twitter page as well as send out event reminders. Face book promotes a product in real time and brings customers in. As marketers see more value in social media marketing, advertisers continue to increase sequential advertising spending in social media.

LinkedIn is professional business related networking site that allows companies to create professional profiles for themselves as well as their business to network and meet others.

LinkedIn provides its members the opportunity to generate sales leads and business partners (Smith and Kay, (2012). Members can use “Company Pages” similar to face book pages to create an area that will allow business owners to promote their products or services and be able to interact with their customers. Due to spread of spam mail sent to job seeker, leading companies prefer to use LinkedIn for employee's recruitment instead of using different job portals.

According to Deis, Michael and Kyle (2010) YouTube is another popular avenue; advertisements are done in a way to suit the target audience. The type of language used in the commercials and the ideas used to promote the product reflect the audience's style and taste. Also, the advertisements on this platform are usually with the content of the video requested, this is another advantage YouTube brings for advertisers. Certain advertisements are presented with certain videos since the content is relevant. Promotional opportunities such as sponsoring a video are also possible on YouTube. Social media marketing provides organizations with a way to connect with their customers. However, organizations must protect their information as well as closely watch comments and concerns on the social media they use.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study and it comprises of Research Design, Population, Data collection and Data analysis. The chapter addressed the actual methodologies used in the research process from its time of inception to the end. The role of both primary and secondary data in the process of addressing the various research questions was addressed and the manner in which data was collected and later analyzed to reach a reliable conclusion was discussed.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a plan outlining how information is to be gathered for an assessment or evaluation that includes identifying the data gathering method(s), the instruments to be used/created, how the instruments was administered, and how the information was organized and analyzed (Kisilu et al. 2005). The study employed descriptive research design. This design was considered appropriate because data was collected from the marketing department in the disposable baby diapers distributors in Nairobi at one point in time (Mugenda, 2008).

This would be designed to describe the characteristics of a particular phenomenon in a situation. It was used to obtain information concerning the current status of the industry, to survey what exists with respect to the conditions in a situation. The design helped the researcher obtain information concerning the current status of promotional strategies used by the sector and thus relate it to the objective of the research and therefore make it

relevant to the research question as well as getting the correlation between promotional strategies and alternative sales promotion, advertising, personal selling, public relations and social media, (Saunders et al. 2009).

3.3 Target Population

Population refers to the entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics (Kisilu et al. 2005). The population consisted of all disposable baby diapers distributors in Nairobi. Given the relatively small number, a census sampling method was conducted in all 21 distributors. A list of the 21 baby diapers distributors was obtained from the Kenya Bureau of Standards list of diapers importers in Nairobi.

3.4 Data Collection

The study used both structured and semi-structured questionnaire to collect primary data. The questionnaires were administered through email, drop and pick or by personal administration depending on which method was convenient to the specific respondents. The semi structured questionnaire was divided into three parts; A, B and C. Part A addressed general information of the respondents in the disposable baby diapers distributors; part B addressed promotion strategies while part C address social media and related strategies. Questionnaires were administered to the marketing manager of the participating company.

Questionnaires guarantee confidentiality as respondents act without any fear. Advantages of questionnaires is that they are cheap and do not require a lot of effort from researcher.

They also have standard answers that make it simple to compile data. A questionnaire is preferred because it is simple to administer and convenient for collecting data within a short time (Saunders 2009).

3.5 Data Processing and Analysis

The data collected through questionnaire was edited and coded for analysis. The researcher used quantitative method of data analysis. Data collected from secondary sources was analyzed manually by first editing the information for accuracy, consistency, completeness and comprehensibility then categorizing it systematically. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyze the data. According to Cooper and Schindler (2001) descriptive statistics reveal characteristics of an array of data and enabled the researcher to use few indices or statistics to meaningfully describe the phenomena under investigation. Descriptive statistics such as mean scores, standard deviation, frequency, correlation and percentages was used to analyze the data. The results were presented in tables and charts.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

According to Saunders et al. (2009), validity can be defined as the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure, while reliability of a research instrument concerns the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials. Although unreliability is always present to a certain extent, there is generally a good deal of consistency in the results of a quality instrument gathered at different times. The tendency toward consistency found in repeated measurements is referred to as reliability.

To ensure reliability and validity, questionnaires were pre-tested on four respondents. This was also to establish whether the questions were relevant and that whether the entire respondents were able to attempt all the questions. However; the response during pre-testing was not to be used in the final study. The questionnaire was then corrected before the final distribution

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis; the data from the completed questionnaires were summarized and tabulated in the form of percentages and frequencies were computed for selected data to enhance interpretation. Out of 21 targeted respondents, only 16 responded which constituted 76% of the sample. The response rate of 76% was considered sufficient to yield meaningful statistical analysis. The respondents who did not respond gave various reasons including sensitivity of information requested, only few senior officers would release information, while others feared misuse of the information requested.

4.2 Background information

The respondents were asked to indicate the highest level of education attained. The results are shown in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Respondents level of education

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Secondary	4	25
College	8	50
University	1	6
Others	3	19
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.1, the results obtained showed that majority (50%) of the respondents were college graduate followed by those with secondary education for (25%) of total respondents, (19%) of respondents are of the opinion that respondents had other qualification not mentioned in the study like tertiary education while (6%) of the respondents are university graduates. This results show that majority of the respondents are college graduates, this is expected to ensure that baby diapers clients get quality service from well trained staff with proper product knowledge and communication skills.

The respondents were asked to indicate their work experience. The results are shown in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Respondents work experience

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	1	12
1-6 years	4	24
7-10 years	5	32
11-14 years	3	16
Above 15 years	3	16
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.2, the results established that majority (32%) of respondents had worked with baby diapers distributors for between 7 to 10 years. On the other hand 24% of them had worked for 1 to 6 years; 16% had worked for between 11-15 years. Only 12% of the respondents have worked with diapers distributors for less than 1 year. This shows that the majority of employees had sufficient work experience. From the findings, most employees have more than seven years experience, this signifies that the staffs are well equipped with experience of handling challenges and therefore the reasons why there have been continued improvement in performance over the past years.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the distributor had marketing department or not. It was revealed that majority (56%) of the respondents stated that diapers distributors had marketing department while minority (44%) of respondents said that baby diapers distributors had no marketing department. Based on the majority of the respondents, it was concluded that baby diapers distributors had marketing department. This was an indication of the fact that customers and other marketing issues were well addressed by professionals.

The respondents were asked to indicate the category of baby diapers distributors. The responses are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Respondents categories of baby diapers

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Small	5	31
Medium	8	50
Extra large	3	19
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.3, the findings showed that majority (50%) of respondents had the medium category, 31% small category while 19% of the respondents had the extra large category. Based on the majority, it was concluded that baby diapers distributors stock more of the medium category and that distributors can benefit from the advantages of babies 'growth.

Respondents were asked to indicate the number of dealers of baby diapers distributor.

The responses are shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Respondents number of dealers

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Below 50	1	3
80-100	9	56
100-150	4	25
Above 150	2	6
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.4, it was established that majority (56%) of the respondents said that baby diapers distributors had between 80-100 dealers, 6% of respondents had above 150 dealers while 3% of the respondents had below 50 dealers. It was concluded that majority of the baby diapers distributors were medium size companies with between 80-100 dealers. Small companies operated with 50 dealers and below which represented 3% of the respondents. Big distributors had above 150 dealers forming 6% of the respondents

4.3 Promotional Strategies

The respondents were asked whether advertising affects baby diapers competitive advantage. The findings are shown in the table 4.6.

Table 4.5: Response on Television advertising

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	25
Agree	7	44
Neutral	3	19
Disagree	1	6
Strongly disagree	1	6
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.5, the findings revealed that majority (44%) of the respondents agreed that television advertising affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that television advertising affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage. Only 6% of the respondents strongly disagreed that

television advertising affect baby diapers distributor's competitiveness advantage. This implies that placing advertisement in television affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage since it created awareness of distributors' brands.

The respondents were asked to establish the effect of radio advertising in baby diapers distributor competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Response on Radio advertising

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	2	13
Large extent	4	25
Moderate	8	50
Low	1	6
Not at all	1	6
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.6, it was established that majority (50%) of the respondents stated that radio advertising moderately affect baby diapers distributor competitive advantage, 25% of the respondents said that radio advertising affect baby diapers distributor competitive advantage to large extent, while 6% of the respondents stated that radio advertising affect baby diapers distributor competitive advantage lowly and not at all respectively. Based on the majority, it was concluded that radio advertising affect baby diapers distributor competitive advantage moderately because it has the ability to reach so many people at one time.

The respondents were asked to establish the effect of billboard advertising in baby diapers distributor competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Response on billboard advertising

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	4	25
Agree	8	50
Neutral	3	19
Disagree	1	6
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.8, the findings revealed that majority (50%) of respondents agreed that billboard advertising affects baby diapers distributors' competitive advantage, 25% of the respondents strongly agreed that billboard advertising affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage. Only 6% of the respondents disagreed that baby diapers distributors affect competitive advantage. This implies that clients would see billboards regularly, which makes it more likely for billboard's advertisement to stick in their minds.

The respondents were asked to establish the effect of sales promotion in baby diapers distributor competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Response on sales promotion

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	7	44
Agree	5	31
Neutral	3	19
Disagree	1	6
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As shown in table 4.8, the finding revealed that majority (44) of the respondents strongly agree that sales promotion affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage, 31% of the respondents agree that sales promotion affect baby diapers distributors competitive

advantage with only 6% disagreeing that sales promotion affect distributors competitive advantage. This implies that sales promotion provides information to potential customers that aid them in making a decision. This is beneficial for products that are complicated or are unfamiliar to consumers.

The study sought to establish the effect of free sample in baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses were shown in table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Response on free sample

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	1	6
Large extent	3	19
Much extent	4	25
Some extent	6	38
Not so much	2	12
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.9, the results showed that (38%) of the respondents indicated that free sample affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage to some extent, 12% of the respondents said that free sample did not have much effect on baby diapers distributors competitive advantage. By providing product samples, distributors eliminate the fear factor and allow clients to test the product risk free. This helps in establishing consumer confidence toward developing brand loyalty. Free samples are used in attracting customers from other competing brands by having them try a new brand in the market.

The study sought to establish the effect of sales contest in baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Response on sales contest

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	12
Agree	3	19
Neutral	6	38
Disagree	5	31
Strongly disagree	0	0
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.10, majority (38%) of the respondents was neutral as to whether sales contest affect distributors competitive advantage or not, 31% of the respondents disagreed that sales contest affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage. it was concluded that sales contests do not really increase sales over the long run, but merely provide a short term sales expansion.

The study sought to establish the effect of personal selling in baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.11.

Table 4.11: Response on personal selling

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	7	44
Agree	4	25
Neutral	3	19
Disagree	1	6
Strongly disagree	1	6
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.11, majority (44%) of the respondents strongly agreed that personal selling affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage, 25% of respondents agree that personal selling affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage while 19% of the respondents are neutral. This implies that personal selling builds a stronger long term relationship, establishes personal contact, encourages clients' loyalty and builds rapport between the potential client and the salesperson.

The respondents were asked to indicate the effect of customer relationship on baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Customer relationship

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	1	6
Large extent	3	19
Much extent	4	25
Some extent	6	38
Not so much	2	12
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.12, results showed that majority (38%) of the respondents indicated that customer relationship affect the baby diapers distributors competitive advantage to some extent, 25% of respondents stated that customer relationship affect the baby diapers distributors competitive advantage to much extent while 19% of respondents showed that customer relationship affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage to large extent. It was concluded that customer relationship marketing helps pinpoint customers who are too costly to maintain relationships with, as well as opportunities for growing underdeveloped potential markets.

The study sought to establish the effect of public relations on baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Response on public relations

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	13
Agree	5	31
Neutral	7	44
Disagree	1	6
Strongly disagree	1	6
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.13, majority (44%) of the respondents revealed that public relation may or may not affect the competitiveness of baby diapers distributors, 31% of the respondents agree that public relations affect baby diapers distributors' competitive advantage while 13% of the respondents strongly agree that public relations affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage. this implies that marketers do not have direct control over whether a message is delivered and where it is placed for delivery.

The respondents were asked to indicate the effect of employee communication on baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.14

Table 4.14: Response on employee communication

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	3	19
Large extent	8	50
Moderate	4	25
Low	1	6
Not at all	0	0
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.14, the findings showed that majority (50%) of respondents indicated that employee communication affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage to large extent, 25% of respondents said that employee communication affect

baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage moderately while 19% of respondents stated that employee communication affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage to very large extent. It was concluded that employee communication facilitates the process by holding open enrollment meetings, interactive webcasts, and developing user friendly communication pieces.

The study sought to establish the effect of social media on baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. The responses are shown in table 4.15.

Table 4.15: Response on social media

Category	Frequency	Percentage
You tube	2	13
Twitter	5	31
Face book	9	56
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.15, the findings revealed that most (56%) of respondents indicated that face books interactions affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage, 31% of respondents said that twitter affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage while 13% of respondents said that you tube media interactions affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage. This implies that marketers use face book page to publicize business name, address, contact details and briefly describe distributor's products.

The respondents were asked to indicate the effect of social media competitiveness on baby diapers distributors. The responses were shown in table 4.17 below.

Table 4.16: Response on social media competitiveness

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	1	6
Large extent	3	19
Moderate	9	56
Low	2	13
Not at all	1	6
Total	16	100

Source: Author (2013)

As indicated in table 4.16, it was revealed that majority (56%) of respondents said that social media interactions affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage moderately, 19% of respondents indicated that social media affects baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage to large extent while 13% of respondents stated that social media affects baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage lowly. It was concluded that social media gives confirmation of why distributors are doing business, honesty and highlight social media engagement hence more clients will come distributor's way.

4.4 Discussion of the Findings

The study sought to find out whether advertising affects baby diapers competitive advantage. the findings revealed that majority (44%) of the respondents agreed that television advertising affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage, 25% of the respondents strongly agree that television advertising affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage. This implies that placing advertisement in television affects baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage since it creates awareness of distributors' brands. Further the researcher wanted to establish the effect of sales promotion on baby diapers distributor competitiveness. the finding revealed that majority (44) of the

respondents strongly agreed that sales promotion affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage, 31% of the respondents agree that sales promotion affect baby diapers distributors competitive advantage which implied that sales promotion provides information to potential customers that aid them in making a decision. This is beneficial for products that are complicated or are unfamiliar to consumers

The study also sought to establish the effect of personal selling on baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. Results indicated that majority (44%) of the respondents strongly agree that personal selling affects baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage, 25% of respondents agree that personal selling affect baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage implying that personal selling builds a stronger long term relationship, establishes personal contacts, encourages clients loyalty and builds rapport between the potential client and the salesperson. Additionally the study sought to establish the effect of social media competitiveness on baby diapers distributors' competitiveness. It was revealed that majority (56%) of respondents said that social media affects baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage moderately and 19% of respondents indicated that social media affects baby diapers distributor's competitive advantage to large extent. It was concluded that social media engagement helps to attract more clients to distributors' products.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study as they relate to the objective of the study. The data obtained in this chapter were obtained through a questionnaire. It also includes suggestions for further research in the area of promotional strategies on competitive advantage. The chapter incorporates the various suggestions and comments given by the respondents in the questionnaire. Findings have been summarized alongside the objective of the study, conclusions have been drawn from the study and the recommendations for actions were given.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The respondents to this research were head of marketing who were of the opinion that baby diapers distributors employ promotional strategies to serve their customers. Majority of respondents agreed that television advertising affect the competitiveness of baby diapers distributors. With TV advertising, customers can see how a product looks like and can hear it if audio is included in the product. TV works in time slots and is easy to reach the group the distributors want to reach.

The researcher established majority of the respondents were of the opinion that radio advertising affect the competitiveness of distributors moderately. Local radio attracts an audience that wants to keep up with local news, events and personalities. Radio is actually a far more affordable and effective advertising media. Radio advertising helped

distributors generate more traffic, generate more sales and increase profit. The study agreed that billboard advertising affect the competitiveness of baby diapers distributors because billboard advertising grabs the attention of potential customers like no other form of advertising can. Billboard advertising that are colorful, creative and eye catching have more impact on brand awareness and strong name recognition and reaches out to thousands of people on a daily basis. Billboard advertising targets a specific audience according to location. The advertisements are not lost in the mix of competitors and editorials and messages are delivered continuously and frequently.

The researcher revealed that majority of baby diapers distributors strongly agree that sales promotion affect distributor's competitiveness. Sales promotion offered reduced price on products which lure customers away from competitors. They also helped turn customers into regular shoppers and provided information to potential customers that aid them in making a purchase decision. The results also indicated that respondents strongly agree that personal selling affect diapers distributor's competitiveness. Further study revealed that respondents were neutral on the effect of public relations on competitiveness of baby diapers distributors. It was also revealed that social media advertising affect baby diapers distributor's competitiveness moderately. Furthermore majority of the respondents stated that social media advertising affect the competitiveness of baby diapers distributor's moderately.

5.3 Conclusions

Several conclusions can be drawn from the findings of this study. First, promotional strategies have a negative impact on distributor's competitive advantage especially where product delivery is poor, poor product quality, mismanagement and poor handling of customer complains.

Secondly, pricing is negatively related to distributor's competitive advantage. This is attributed to the negative impact of local taxes on the importation of diapers. The level of product quality rendered to the public by the some distributors does not represent value for money paid due to poor materials. Furthermore, most distributors have poor customer relationship and poor communication skills. Hence, their competitive advantage is very low even though their values have been rapidly rising.

Thirdly, the study also found a positive impact on TV, radio, billboard, sales promotion and personal selling since they increase value to the basic products of distributors.

5.4 Limitations of Research

Future studies should incorporate other methods of data collection like interviews and open ended questions as much as possible in order to get the respondents opinions and help the researcher to draw qualitative inferences.

The respondents approached were reluctant in giving information fearing the confidentiality and sensitivity of the study as a major limitation. Many respondents had high level of suspicions and lacked trust as they thought the study aimed to use the findings against their job undertakings.

The researcher also encountered problems in eliciting information from the respondents as the information required was subject to areas of emotions, attitudes and perceptions, which could not be accurately quantified and verified objectively.

There was also bureaucracy in getting approval to carryout research in the baby diapers distributors. Written approval had to be sought from the Directors of some firms and this resulted in time delays. However, despite all these limitations the response rate was good at 76%.

5.5 Implications of Results

TV works in time slots and is easy to reach the group the distributors want to reach. Radio advertising helped distributors generate more traffic, generate more sales and increase profit. Billboard advertising grabs the attention of potential customers like no other form of advertising. Sales promotion helped turn customers into regular shoppers and provided information to potential customers that aid them in making a purchase decision.

5.6 Recommendations

5.5.1 Recommendation with Policy Implication

This study found out that baby diapers distributors should incorporate social media as promotional strategy towards achieving the overall competitive advantage. It is therefore recommended that there should be a policy that baby diapers advertise through the social media.

Secondly, the study found out that giving free sample to customers of baby diapers affect distributors competitiveness to some extent. It was therefore recommended that distributors should offer free samples of diapers in order to create more awareness to its customers.

Finally, it was also recommended that distributors provide sales contest so as to increase the level of sales and to improve the profitability of baby diapers distributors.

5.5.2 Suggestion for Further Research

This study focused on effects of promotional strategies on competitive advantage of baby diapers distributors in Nairobi. Further research could be carried on the influence of promotional strategies on competitive advantage of baby diapers distributors in Kenya; there are other promotional strategies that are different from the ones identified in this study which include direct marketing. Future studies should also set aside adequate time to conduct interviews and search the secondary sources of data available at the diapers distributors.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MBA PROGRAM

Telephone: 020-2059162
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197
Nairobi, Kenya

21st August, 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: MWANGI F. K – REG NO: D61/725832012

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He has successfully completed Part I (Course Work) of his degree studies and will be embarking on Part II (Project Proposal) this semester. He is required to submit a research project report in his area of specialization which involves going out in the field to collect data from various organizations.

Any assistance accorded him will be greatly appreciated.


PATRICK NYABUTO
FOR: MBA CO-ORDINATOR
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS



Appendix II: List of Baby Diapers Importers

	COMPANY	ADDRESS	EMAIL
1	BALGORAY TRADING COMPANY LIMITED	385 NAIROBI	N/A
2	DALLASCO LOGISTICS INTERNATIONAL LTD	6769 NAIROBI	N/A
3	DELTA MEDICAL DEVICES AND INSTRUMENTS LT	104527 NAIROBI	N/A
4	DOHA GROUP COMPANY LIMITED	68986 NAIROBI	N/A
5	ELBEBEK TRADERS LIMITED	16452 NAIROBI	N/A
6	FAIRMAN INDUSTRIES	57601 NAIROBI	
8	GLESTA INVESTMENTS LIMITED	11 662 NAIROBI	glesterinve@yahoo.com
9	HASBAH KENYA LIMITED	11 500 NAIROBI	N/A
10	KIM FAY EAST AFRICA LIMITED	623 NAIROBI	N/A
11	KING S WEAR LIMITED	44861 NAIROBI	N/A
12	MALACHI INVESTMENT LIMITED	11662 NAIROBI	N/A
13	MARHIAM ENTERPRISES LIMITED	63791 NAIROBI	N/A
14	MARVEL FIVE INVESTMENTS LIMITED	63791 NAIROBI	N/A
15	RADBONECLARK KENYA LTD	40833 NAIROBI	N/A
16	RISING VENTURES LIMITED	61 326 NAIROBI	N/A
17	RIVERLAND LIMITED	62335 NAIROBI	N/A
18	TROPIKAL BRANDS AFRIKA LIMITED	49465 NAIROBI	N/A
19	TWIN TRADE AFRICA LIMITED	33845 NAIROBI	N/A
20	WESTLANDS TRADING LTD	30590 NAIROBI	new.westland@wananchi.com
21	INTERCOSUMER PRODUCTS LTD	19558-00200 NAIROBI	N/A

Source: Kenya Bureau of Standards

Appendix III: Questionnaire

Section A

Background Information

Please answer these questions. Your participation will be highly appreciated.

1 Please indicate your position in this company.....

2. Please indicate your highest level of education

a) Secondary ()

b) College ()

c) University ()

d) Others ()

3. How long has your company been distributing baby diapers?

a) Less than 1 year ()

b) 1-6 years ()

c) 7-10 years ()

d) 11-14 years ()

e) Above 15 years ()

4. Does your company have a marketing department?

Yes ()

No ()

If no, which department is entrusted with the marketing functions?

.....

5. What are the categories of your baby diapers? Please tick where appropriate.

a) Mini (Small) ()

b) Medium (Large) ()

c) Maxi (Extra Large) ()

6. Please indicate any other categorization.....

.....

7. How many dealers does the company have?

- a) Less than 50 dealers ()
- b) Between 50 and 100 dealers ()
- c) Between 100 and 150 dealers ()
- d) Over 150 dealers ()

SECTION B

Promotional Strategies

8. Do you agree that advertising through television affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers in Nairobi?

- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

9. To what extent does radio advertisement affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

- To very large extent large extent Moderate Low Not at all

Please Explain.

.....
.....

10. Do you think that advertising through billboards affects the competitiveness disposable baby diapers?

- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree strongly disagree

Please

explain.....

11. Do you agree that sales promotion affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers in Nairobi?

- Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

12. To what extent does a free sample affect the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

Very large extent Large extent Much extent Some extent Not so much

13. Do you agree that sales contest affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral
 Disagree Strongly disagree

Please

explain.....

.....

14. Do you agree that personal selling affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

15. To what extent does customer relationship affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

Very large extent Large extent Much extent Some extent Not so much

16. Do agree that public relations affect the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

17. Rate the extent to which employee communication affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

To a very large extent large extent Moderate Low extent Not at all

SECTION C

Social Media related promotional strategies

18. Please indicate by ticking the social media which your organization uses to achieve competitive advantage in disposable baby diapers

Face book Twitter You tube

19. Rate the extent to which social media affects the competitiveness of disposable baby diapers?

To a very large extent large extent Moderate Low extent Not at all

Please

explain.....

Thank you!