

## **Art As a Dependable Driving Force In New Age Marketing**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Art has been a traditional marketing tool for ages. Visual and performing arts have been used for publicity, advertising, and marketing promotions in many media. With the advent of the internet and the integration of digital technology into the marketing process, the scope of marketing and its networks have extended. Technology has ushered in new-age marketing, which is the use of online and offline platforms to market goods, services, and ideas. Consequently, the extent of engagement of the arts in the process of marketing has expanded to address emerging needs. New-age marketing is electronically driven, with graphic arts as one of its central pivots. The graphic designer is therefore tasked to combine artistic skills with the offerings of digital technology, including social media networks towards attracting patronage from local and global domains. This paper reviews the structure and functionality of arts in general marketing; the increasing relevance of digital graphics in the complex of new-age marketing and strategies required to attract patronage for products, services, and ideas.

**Keywords:** Art; New Age; Marketing.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Many knowledge sectors now appear to be interwoven in the global workspace. Many disciplines are now interdependent to buttress existence or to ease practice. Technology, for instance, easily interfaces with many disciplines for positive transformation in so many ways (Andrew 2008; Nzuanke & Chinaka 2018). Where art is concerned, technology is now driving art production and consumption in the visual and performative domains. Just as technology relates with other disciplines, arts and culture also interface with many other knowledge domains to achieve results. Theatre, for instance, has been used successfully in many instances as therapy in different medical conditions. Art and craft have also been used in different stages of socio-psychological rehabilitation. In the area of information visualization, art has become almost indispensable. Information visualization has moved from the pages of texts to virtual environments where they are displayed as static or animated graphic figures. Generally, art is

tightly interwoven with society. And so inevitably, the products of arts are widely integrated and consumed in many spheres of life. Following this trend of overlapping disciplinary interests, it is not surprising that art has become an integral part of the marketing process. This paper is set to review the current extensions of the arts; to analyze the dimensions of integration of arts into the marketing process and the impact generated by that synergy.

## **BROAD SPECIALTIES OF THE ARTS AND THEIR VOCABULARY**

Arts, being the expression of human creative skills manifests in four broad categories. The first is Literary Arts, consisting of prose, poetry, and drama. The second is Fine Arts, made up of drawing, painting, sculpture, graphics, ceramics, and textiles. Performing Arts is the third category with many subcategories, including theatre, music, dance, film, pantomime, carnival, stand-up comedy, and the like. The fourth and latest category is Electronic Based Arts (EBA), consisting of photography, video, and film. Some authorities insist that the Electronic Based Arts can no longer be subsumed under the 3 earlier categories, and so prefer to categorise them distinctly (Blistene 2001; Getlein 2008). Interestingly, the major categories, as well as the sub-categories of arts, frequently draw contents from each other. For instance, the performing arts and film often draw scripts from drama, prose, or poetry; they draw props and scenery from fine arts. On the flip side, fine art often draws inspiration from poetry and visual content from performances, including festivals.

Art in whichever form is usually expressed using certain ‘vocabularies’ that must be mastered by the artist or artiste. Mark Getlein (2008) uses the expression “the vocabulary of arts” to refer to the elements and principles of artistic expression (p. 80). The elements of arts, being the tools of production include line, shape, form, texture, space, and colour. Movement and time may be included in the context of performance. The fundamental principles of art are unity, variety, balance, proportion, rhythm, movement, emphasis, hierarchy, repetition, and contrast. The principles provide the formula for artistic production; they guide the artist on the use of the elements. These ‘vocabularies’ of arts provide tangible forms to arts and help shape the outlook of most art forms. Their usage determines the aesthetic quality and in some cases the functionality of arts. They provide character and spice, features that make arts adaptable for use as marketing tools and other functions.

## **THE BASIC CONCEPT OF MARKETING**

Marketing is a process that involves promoting, selling, and distributing products, services, or ideas (Malhotra et al., 2017; Akpan 2021). The process may involve developing products, pricing them strategically, making them available to customers through a distribution network, and promoting them through sales and advertising activities (Kotler 1988). Reema further breaks down the marketing process based on the following pillars:

- (i) Identification of the prospective customers or the target market.
- (ii) Understanding the needs and wants of the customers or the target market by connecting with them.
- (iii) Development of products or services for satisfying the needs of the target market.
- (iv) Satisfying the needs of the target market better than the competitors.
- (v) Ensuring profitable sales for the business (Obeidat 2021).

The core strategies of basic marketing could, therefore, be summarized to include targeting the right market, providing value, improving the network of patrons, maintaining relationships, and making a profit (Tong Luo & Xu 2020). Generally, marketing is driven by key factors, namely, product, price, place, promotion, public, people, process, and physical evidence.

Advertising is a major feature in marketing management. It calls for intensive information, persuasion, and reminding, which art helps to do. Galbraith's outline of the expectations of advertising in marketing management include:

- Identifying products and differentiating them from the others
- Communicating information about the product
- Stimulating distribution
- Increase use of the product
- Build value, brand preference, and loyalty
- The lower overall cost of the product (2008, p. 84).

Most of the activities in Galbraith's outline can be driven directly or indirectly by the earlier adumbrated visual, performative, and electronic-based art forms.

## **THE CONCEPT OF NEW AGE MARKETING**

New age marketing is the use of online and offline platforms to market goods, services and ideas. The online platform particularly reaches wider audiences within a relatively compressed time frame (Gardiner et al., 2005). The new-age marketing option offers the marketer multiple platforms for promotion and advertising, while the customer has wider choices and the opportunity to shop online for products that could be delivered at any location via a sophisticated logistic plan. New-age marketing is electronically driven, and so requires electronic technology and tools to function (Dhar 2008). Social media is a major tool of new-age marketing and its participation is critical to the operations of the new-age marketing process (Akpan 2021). It is viral in nature and reaches wider audiences than ever before. It offers the platforms for people to chat about products, services, and ideas, and empowers the consumers to create a network to 'speak' to brands instead of the earlier narrative of brands 'speaking' to consumers. Social media has therefore flattened the conventional network of power and hierarchy. It is about people, participation, and community; a shift from monologue to dialogue, the hallmark of change from traditional marketing to new-age marketing.

In response to the sweeping transformation in marketing approaches and platforms, well-known traditional products are changing their forms to be able to attract wider patronage. For instance, books are now being published online, the essence of which is to have soft copies that would fit into the internet-driven market environment characterized by high traffic and sales. Many brands now realise that they can propel consumers from shopping in stores towards shopping online, sometimes using specially developed apps. The online medium helps producers get real-time feedback from customers, which would not have been possible using conventional marketing channels. The feedback mechanism, incorporating data analytics has opened up a tremendous opportunity for producers to adjust to the trend of demands in quality, quantity, and locations.

Contributing to the discussion on new-age marketing, Johnson et al., (2017) underlines the need to understand the dynamics of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century marketplace, which consists of a wider space and contents; globalized, with more products and customers with wide latitudes of

choices. The structure of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century marketplace has challenged the conventions and, indeed the strength of the traditional marketing strategies. In this regard, Wilson strongly suggests the use of online marketing, which is invariably new-age marketing.

Wilson illustrates the online marketing strategy, using the figure below:



**Figure 1**

**Wilson's Online Marketing Strategy (Credits: <https://thenextscoop.com/marketing-strategies-business-owners>)**

Based on the illustration, the online marketing strategy is multi-componential, incorporating social networks, blogs, and content marketing; email and infographics marketing, among others. This strategy is effective for both small and big business owners. Wilson unveils the peculiar qualities of online marketing to include efficiency in reaching diverse customers, the potential to increase the marketer's revenue, and reduced cost of operation, all within a small time frame compared to regular marketing. With proper search engine optimization online, it is possible to scale up a product or business website to appear at the top of a search for potential customers with an eye for similar products.

## THE USE OF ARTS IN TRADITIONAL MARKETING

Art has been a 'glamoriser', helping to market products from time. Visual, performing, and literary arts, presented live or through the electronic media have been effective tools in marketing products, services, and ideas (Johnson et al., 2020). Visual artistic media include billboards and posters produced mainly for ambulatory audiences; handbills, stickers, prints on accessories and memorabilia – apparel, face caps, t-shirts, hand bands, bandanas, calendars, plaques, umbrellas, mugs and many other items. The performative media incorporate drama, dance, carnival, musical shows, fashion shows, spoken word poetry, and many other performative options that could be used for marketing promotions. All these artistic forms are conveyable using electronic media.

Traditionally, art has been useful in the marketing process in the following ways:

1. **Product Branding:** Art helps in building brands for designated goods or services. The physical form of a brand could be a name, logo, symbol, slogan, developed with artistic elements – colour, shape, line, form, texture; layout, and font (Hestad 2016). It is easier to market an artistically vibrant brand than a drab one. Indeed, artistic features are part of the brand strategy. They help in building a reputation. If it is a logo, for instance, it is meant to

be striking, attractive, and unique. With attractive artistic features, one would even find it easy to brand and sell a dummy.

2. **Advertising:** Art helps to advertise products and ideas in so many ways. Art is used in sales promotion, public relations, and direct marketing, which are done through a variety of media, most of which are artistically laid out or managed (Pettis 2001). They include newspapers, magazines, radio, television, special directories, outdoor and transit media, and more recently, online channels.
3. **Product Design:** Frequently, we find tangible products designed artistically to attract attention and to enhance sales. Common examples include consumables such as cakes, biscuits, chin-chin, and other confectioneries. Some containers or packages of consumables are often designed to appeal to consumers. Products such as apparel, bangles, verses, and casseroles sets are among those that literally survive on artistic expressions (McDonagh-Philp & Lebbon 2000).



Figure 2.

**Plate 1 (a,b,c,d,e & f): Artistically Designed Pastries and Beautifully Designed Cakes Meant to Attract the Attention of Consumers).** Note the artistic elements of colour, lines, form, shape, texture, among others. (Photo credits: Smithsonian Magazine, huffpuff.com; kingdomofcakes; timesofindia; goodhousekeeping.com).



4. **Development Communication Campaign Designs:** Art also relates with marketing in the area of Development Communication where art provides a spoonful of sugar that helps the medicine go down. Development Communication is basically selling ideas to engender change (Esser & Hanitzsch 2013). The essence of change communication agrees with that marketing, which is also to promote ideas. Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC) is a Development Communication strategy adopted in campaigns to change behaviour, attitudes & social norms. Many SBCC programmes globally partner with visual and performing arts in the area of message development to communicate for change in the health sector; in advocacy for political change, agricultural innovations, women empowerment & youth rehabilitation. A strong point of identity with advertising as a marketing activity is the process of message design, which is systematic and evidence-based.

## MARKETING WITH THE PERFORMATIVE MEDIA

The performative medium is known to be one of the most exciting and popular media of marketing promotion and communication. The underlying fact is that performance in whatever form has the propensity to draw wide audiences. In a study on extensions and convergences of the performing arts, Andrew-Essien identifies some popular performative options and their uses in marketing:

- i) **Live (theatrical) Performance:** This is a time-tested marketing tool, having been used for several decades in multiple socio-cultural spaces (Sugarman & Bauman 2020). On almost every street corner, people sell drugs, beauty products, communication gadgets, food items, learning aids, and many other products using music, dance, mascots, and other theatrical devices and elements on daily basis. Many companies in Nigeria engage performers on road shows mainly for product publicity. Some adopt popular performers as ambassadors through endorsement deals just to help market their products and enhance their presence in a competitive market terrain.
- ii) **Carnival:** Basically, the carnival is ambulatory theatre; it is an organized public processional display of performing and visual arts intended to relay a message to an audience. Carnival shows are frequently sponsored and themed, and the sponsors receive wide publicity. In Nigeria, there are a number of carnivals, the principal among which are *Carnival Calabar*, Abuja Carnival, and *Eko* Carnival in Lagos. These carnivals draw enormous patronage (Anthony et al., 2019).



(Photo Credits: Esekong Andrew-Essien)

Figure 3

Plate 2(a & b): Port Harcourt Carnival Revellers, 2012 & Carnival Calabar Passion 4 Girls, 2018

*Carnival Calabar* is popularly tagged "Africa's Biggest Street Party" has been sponsored by MTN, Dangote, Airtel, Arik, UBA, and other companies over the years. Inevitably, the products of these sponsors are advertised live and on the media. The media audience watching or listening to the carnival on television and radio is even larger than the live audience. Brands displayed on carnival routes are well-publicized. Abuja Carnival and other carnivals provide similar platforms for publicity. Besides advertising, carnival draws people together in large numbers and this provides an opportunity for spontaneous sales of various products and services.

- iii) **Musical Shows:** Music as a performative art form attracts people and marketers often key into musical shows to promote their products. Musical shows offer opportunities for sponsors to publicize or market their products. In Nigeria, Gidi Culture Festival, One Lagos Fiesta, and Lagos International Jazz Festival are some popular shows that have offered vibrant platforms for art and marketing to synergize.
- iv) **Reality Shows:** These are unscripted live performances projected to wide audiences through the media. Being typically entertaining, reality shows draw wide global viewership and patronage. Firms have latched on the platforms of reality shows such as Big Brother Naija (BBN) to advertise brands and products. The number of sponsors and patronage convey the power of this type of performance in marketing.
- v) **Spoken Word Poetry:** This is poetry activated with the aesthetics of speech, wordplay & vocal variations; poetry not merely written, but enlivened by performance, often with music & multimedia deepening narratives. It has become a force in product marketing. Heritage Bank rides on this platform to project the works of Titilope Sonuga & Efe Paul Azino while advertising their banking products (Andrew-Essien 2018).

Sometimes, these theatrical forms could be mixed in an attempt to intensify publicity. Andrew-Essien's analysis in a study on arts and technology in the marketing mix, using Ferrari World, a tourism facility in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates as a case study suffices to illustrate this (Andrew 2020). Andrew-Essien observes that Ferrari World is beyond tourism; it is "a wholistic marketing idea, meant to push the Ferrari brand to visitors who are expected to imbibe the Ferrari consciousness and to subscribe subsequently. The arts are used in pushing the products to the tourists and would-be patrons". Many of the repertory performances on the Ferrari World La Pizza Stage are mixed - mimes, music, dance, comedy, and circus juggling; replete with the theatrical elements of sound, lighting effects, colour, space, and others.

## THE USE OF ARTS IN NEW AGE MARKETING: FOCUS ON VIRTUAL GRAPHICS

Graphic art is one of the central pivots of digital new-age marketing. The aesthetics of the digital environment is graphically expressed. Beautiful graphics provides the requisite interface for functional engagement. In other words, a well-rendered artistic digital environment is more likely to attract and retain customers for a brand or service. A digital environment is often a network of graphic interfaces. Carla Dena notes that in the virtual environment where online marketing thrives, there are two main types of graphics, vector and raster files (Allen 2019; Mbum et al., 2014). Knowing their basic features and characteristics would be beneficial to designers using them for marketing.

Vector graphics is an image file that uses curves or lines to connect. The curves or lines, called vector paths, form the shapes in a vector image. The most common vector software

program is CorelDRAW. This digital graphic type is popular among artists because it allows scaling without much trouble. Consequently, designs can easily be scaled without having to sacrifice the quality of the image. Besides that, vectors need relatively less storage space. Because vectors are composed mostly of gradients and flat colors, they result in space-efficient files (Allen 2019).

Raster images, on the other hand, are graphics that are made up of pixels. It is sometimes called bitmap graphics. Some of the software programs used to create rasterized images are Adobe Photoshop and Corel Painter. Popular raster file formats include GIF (graphics interchange format) and JPEG (joint photographic experts group), which are lossy formats, and BMP (Windows bitmap) and TIFF (tagged image file format), which are lossless formats. Raster files with more quantities of pixels require bigger storage space. Furthermore, rasters are not as scalable as vectors are. Raster graphics offer more complex visuals and are best used for non-line art images; specifically, digitized photographs scanned artwork or detailed graphics. (source...)The choice of graphic format would therefore depend on the type of marketing publicity required, the display or host environment, and the audiences' ability to access the environment, among other considerations.

Businesses, organizations, and marketers have adopted web graphics in addition to many other elements of digital transformation, including the infusion of artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, and robotized intelligent chatbot assistants to improve customer services and increase customer satisfaction. The use of algorithms in predicting customers' decisions based on their behaviors and preferences has also been observed. The result of these digital innovations can be "rendered or expressed graphically for ease of interpretation" (Kern 2015, p. 114).

In the complexity of the challenges and excitement of business marketing in the digital age, digital graphics is at the forefront. To this end, it is suggested that learning the basics about graphics can equip stakeholders for greater productivity. Graphics can be used, first to promote. Firms can use graphics as a tool to reach out to audiences. Visuals are effective in promoting products or services without using too many words. Marketers, therefore, use graphics to improve website content design or to create an e-mail marketing campaign. Secondly, graphics can be used in advertising. Visual graphics can induce wide-ranging emotions, thus making them a powerful advertising tool. Graphic images, fonts, and layouts are often used by firms to create a strong visual impression on their audiences. Graphic visuals can also function to entertain viewers, especially when used in the context of gaming logo designs and mobile game app designs. Such designs attract gamers' attention and inspire them to want to try playing the game (Lerner 2014).

Forms of digital graphics that could be used for effective marketing include images, infographics, videos, memes, and fonts. Generally, images in graphics are essential because they provide aesthetic character (beauty), thereby attracting audience attention. Moreover, they improve communication value; it is often said pictures speak a thousand words. Images can help fill design space and are often used as background pictures when subdued. They also serve the purposes of identification. Digital images, often used for website and social media content can appear in the form of simple edited photos or can be complex with multiple elements and layers. Sources of images for graphics include photographs, scanned sketches, illustrations or paintings, stock computer images, logos, and monograms. In whatever form, images used by brands must be consistent so as to register an impression easily.



Infographics are meant to present data in a way that is easy to absorb. They include charts, graphs, pictograms, histograms, and maps. They can be included in a website to make presentations more picturesque to a target market (Siricharoen & Siricharoen 2018). Videos are also functional to engage the market's interest. Some brands use videos to attract website views and to demonstrate the peculiarities of their products. Equally useful are memes, which are funny texts, images with comical captions, or videos that are shared via online media. Most memes are exciting, thus making them an effective media tool. They attract likers and followers on social networks.

Fonts are features of digital graphics that carry a lot of visual impact combining utilitarian and aesthetic values. Well-chosen fonts can help emphasize the message as well as glamorize it. Conover (1985) says that well-selected (a reference to type and size) and arranged font helps get the attention of the potential reader or customer and re-inforce the goal of the communication. Fonts, being digitally generated can be easily animated, and animation is a strong advertising tool. While all the design elements are important and must be well articulated in the design process, colour is perhaps more crucial because of the visual impact it generates. In all the forms of graphics that are useable in marketing design, colour use and effects must not be undermined. Andrew observes that vibrant colours in graphics "help in publicity as they draw the viewer's attention faster than dull colours. Competing brands have found colour blocking a valuable strategy of publicity and as a marketing tool" (Labrecque 2013, p. 187). Colours must be brand-related for consistency.

Holy McKelvey, inspired by Seth Godin's submission that "*Marketing is no longer about the things that you make, but about the stories that you tell.*" offers quick tips on actualizing attractive graphics for marketing purposes: First, he advocates for time economy, insisting that time could be saved by using do it yourself (DIY) design tools found online. He says:

Online graphic design is a fast and economical tool to use in promoting your brand. Several innovative companies have launched web-based, DIY style designing tools, which enable the user to create effective, professional-looking graphics, with minimal effort as well as minimal cost. Websites like PosterMyWall, offer a one-stop, online solution for graphic design. They have an incredibly easy user interface and you can customize your designs in minutes only! Browse and employ any of the hundreds of customizable templates for website advertisements, social media posts, flyers, posters, banners, and videos to help visually transform your marketing messages and capture your target market. Your unique, professional-looking marketing materials can be instantly downloaded (or printed,) along with the right to commercially use them for advertising. The cost is minimal and the impact invaluable (<https://www.jeffbullas.com/marketing-graphics-on-a-budget>).

Secondly, McKelvey advises designers to 'get social' with their potential customers. This means engaging them through social media. The designer is expected to have a presence on social media platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and the like. This is critical to creating a brand identity and positive brand association. Social media is noted to have catapulted digital marketing from a business necessity into a social reality. In what seems to be an echo of Dena's point, McKelvey also advises designers to leverage the power of video content, noting that a video clip is extremely compelling. He observes:

Whether someone is actively in consumer mode, or just surfing the web, the power of video to influence consumer behavior is unparalleled. Video posts receive up to 10 times

the engagement of still images, and marketers who use video on average, grow revenue 49% faster than non-video users (<https://www.jeffbullas.com/marketing-graphics-on-a-budget>).

To cut production costs, he suggests the use of online video resources such as stock footage provided by [Animoto](#), [WeVideo](#), and [PosterMyWall](#). McKelvey says after creating the graphics and becoming active on social media, it is necessary to blog. Blogging is inherently interactive and puts the marketer/designer in close contact with the target audience. The feedback conduit created by blogging is a vital feature of new-age marketing (<https://www.jeffbullas.com/marketing-graphics-on-a-budget>).

## CONCLUSION

For general marketing, a strong recommendation is that arts in all ramifications be used as 'combination therapy' for maximum impact. New-age digital/online strategies should be combined with traditional marketing methods for optimal results. Stand-alone advertising options may in some cases be limited in capacity to accomplish expected results in the marketing process. To this effect, Andrew recommends the use of the Compacted Multimedia Model originally developed for use in development communication projects. That model summarizes that messages become denser when they are superimposed in a communication field and stand better chances of impacting the target audiences greatly. Live theatrical performances, electronic/internet-based media, and visual media are combined in this model to enforce the intensity of messages. The model could be adapted and applied in marketing. The advantage of using this model is that it can reach all populations and social profiles identified in the audience classification. This offers an all-around advantage to any marketer to extend coverage and maximise profit.

Finally, for effective integration of communication media and techniques, designers and other stakeholders must understand the workability of the options. Creative designers in particular should regularly update knowledge on programmes and devices that enhance productions for the new age market. This would firmly *position not only the arts but also the artists as dependable driving forces in new-age marketing. The evolving marketing, markets, and consumers' terrains within the complex global social economy call for nothing short of excellence.*

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