Analysis of marketing communication tools employed by suppliers of electrical construction materials: a case study of firms in Nairobi

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Abstract: The objectives of this study were to establish the methods used to identify the target audiences to whom the marketing communication should be directed; to establish the extent of use of various marketing communication techniques in the industry; to identify the constraints hindering appropriate and effective marketing communication in the industry, and to come up with the necessary recommendations on improvements that need to be effected by those in the industry to address the information requirements of the different stakeholders. A descriptive survey aimed at determining the marketing communication tools used by suppliers of electrical materials to the construction industry in Nairobi was applied. A census was conducted as the firms in question were only twenty one in Nairobi. A semi structured self completion questionnaire was used to collect the data. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings show that 69% of the firms use either advertising in building professional magazines and daily papers or sales promotion/exhibitions as their topmost marketing communication techniques. Other techniques in popular usage were direct contact with customers and word of mouth at 54% and use of database of contractors. The findings also indicate that most (93%) of the firms make use of marketing tools with only 7% failing to use the tools in reference. The findings indicate that lack of marketing departments, differences in pricing of goods based on their countries of origins, competition and the high cost of advertising are the key constraints in the industry. Some of the suggestions were that the advertising companies must improve on their output. The study recommends that there is need for the establishment of a marketing department based on the firms needs and resources available where it is lacking. This will help the companies to improve on their marketing orientation that could spur demand of their products. Another was in assigning of more resources to marketing. Advertising companies must improve their output. The companies also need to invest some money to encourage innovation and develop new ideas. They could develop customer intimacy programs similar to one used by General Electric.