



Customer Satisfaction

Competition amongst banks is on the increase. New strategies are being sought each day to make sure the number of accounts opened and the profits realised from these accounts are on the increase. Gone are the days when banks were snobbish to the point of being arrogant and kicking you out because you were below the minimum acceptable limit of funds. Walk into a bank today and you'll be spoilt for choice on which kind of account to open. In fact, you don't have walk into the bank... the bank will come to you, as smartly dressed executives, wrestling for five minutes of your time to hawk loans and accounts to you on the streets, ATM lobbies and even markets.

That aside, it's time to test the waters and see if the strategies and counter-strategies the banks are employing are working. That is why Consumer Insight recently conducted Ishara, a bank customer satisfaction survey. "We asked banked individuals if the financial institutions they banked with had indeed improved their game; had the strategies developed at boardroom level translated to a better experience for people walking into the banking halls or not?" says Githinji Njogu, research manager.

When you get into a banking hall for the first time, you'd expect to find clear, well-displayed signage directing you to the different sections or departments in the bank. This is however not the case in all banks. In some banks, you will spend the first few minutes trying to figure out where to go and how to get there. While for others, you could find where you need to be even when blindfolded. In the absence of clear markings to avoid what interior designers call visual clutter, some banks opt to have customer service representatives direct you to where you need to be.

In a bid to maximise on profits, many banks have reduced the number of personnel serving anyone walking into the bank. This has led to long queues of account holders receiving a cold welcome from empty teller booths. As Githinji Njogu says, having to stand in a long queue that hardly moves with a throat as dry as the Sahara can be taxing on your level of patience and blood pressure. Now what can really make you blow over is someone jumping the queue and getting served before you. Relax, you are not alone. Many have experienced this. It is repeated over and over every day, with some banks accommodating such practices more than others.

Handling a small number of clientele is good for many businesses, especially for the customers. It helps build personal relationships and make the customer feel special. But this isn't what most Kenyan banks do. For them, the more, the merrier. What this means for the account holder is the personal relation you had with a bank teller or even manager is eroded, as the same person has many more people to deal with. And increasing staff isn't an option for the banks as they need to maximise their profits.

"This reduces you from the important customer who had a very personal relationship with the bank, to a mere account number, with the level of the bank's interest in you being determined by the number of bold zeros at the bottom of your monthly statement," adds Githinji Njogu.

The impression you get when you visit a business really counts. This is especially true for banks, where product offerings, though wide, are very similar. A customer can choose to switch banks because they don't like a teller's cologne or the colours used in the banking hall signage.

For some customers, going to the bank is a hassle and an experience they don't look forward to. While for others, the occasional trip to the bank is welcomed with a smile because of the fond memories of times spent there.

With the number of Kenyans with access to banking services increasing more than bank branches, personnel and product offerings, it is unlikely banks will ever satisfy the needs of their customers. This, however, doesn't mean banks can relax because by all means, they aren't. Banks are still stalking Kenyans, begging, pleading and coercing them to open accounts even at churches! The first thing they should do is make sure that they have in place the infrastructure, staff and courtesy needed to handle not just another account number, but a person trusting them with their hard-earned money.

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QUARTER 4

OCT/NOV/DEC

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

TO PARTICIPATE CONTACT SECRETARIAT

ACTIVITY - MSRA IDENTITY CARDS

LEADER JANE DELORIE, RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

TIMING IMPLEMENT BY QUARTER 4, 2008

MSRA accredited Identity Cards have been developed and issued to member agencies for implementation. These cards are meant to generate wider awareness of MSRA and promote a sense of quality and accountability within the industry.

ACTIVITY - VISUAL RESEARCH

LEADER STEVE GREENLAND, NIELSEN

TIMING - Q3 DATA COLLECTION, Q4 ANALYSIS & RESULTS

Data collection for the study has been completed and analysis is ongoing. Results of the same are expected in quarter 4. The objective for this study is to develop image banks for the various layers of society to improve segmentation tools for the market.

EVENT - CELEBRITY EVENING TALKS

MSRA has held several evening celebrity talks where a guest speaker is invited to speak on various topical issues concerning research. These talks have proven quite popular to both members and non-members

The next Celebrity Talk will be held in **October 2008**. Details of the same will be availed in due time.

MEMBER UPDATES

SYNOVATE EXPANDS AFRICA FOOTPRINT



The Steadman Group has recently been acquired by Synovate. Synovate is owned by the Aegis Group plc - a leading marketing services company listed on the London Stock Exchange. With the acquisition of The Steadman Group, Synovate now has presence in 63 countries globally.

Both clients and staff will benefit from access to new tools, processes, technologies, solutions & innovations. The staff and management will remain the same. However, The Steadman Group corporate identity will transition to Synovate in the coming months.

TGI Arrives In Nigeria

Consumer Insight is happy to announce that TGI is now available in Nigeria, with continuous surveys covering 38 towns. Users in Nigeria can now benefit from the kind of insights that have allowed our clients to peer deep into the heart of the African consumer.

What is TGI?

TGI (Target Group Index) is a global network of single-source market research surveys providing invaluable, comparable consumer insights for over 50 countries across 6 continents. TGI can help clients find the answers to all types of marketing questions, quickly and flexibly.

And now, TGI arrives in Nigeria.

WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE GANDER IS GOOD FOR THE GOOSE

Written by Boniface Ngahu



Emerging Trends For The Male Shopper

For a long time male shoppers have been faced with many challenges especially when it comes to buying and consuming products that are otherwise meant for the feminine market. This has been worsened by various changes in the market place and in life. This is best depicted by various advertisements that portray men in various consumption and buying roles.

Do you remember an advertisement that had a man hiding from his wife and children to have a bite of his chocolate bar? What about the one of a man buying condoms who ends up buying so many items he didn't need just to cover up his only intended purchase? In a supermarket's bill board, a bachelor ends up getting more than he bargained for- a suitor, for as the supermarkets slogan states, "You need it, we've got it".

As all these advertisements suggest, the male shopper has been evolving slowly but surely. He is now quietly demanding for his share of the shopping basket and as recent research indicates, he is slowly getting it. Research indicates that the modern man is more involved in shopping decisions than his dad used to be. This is mainly driven by the various changes in lifestyles and the society. For example, consumer behavior experts have noted that both men and women are marrying later than they used to because of career orientation and long periods of study. This has also been linked to growing individualism especially among the younger generation. This has also resulted in men having to do grocery shopping, buy their own utensils and household items which was a rare occurrence in the past.

Innovations also have a way of shaping peoples habits. It is reported that the invention of the contraceptive pills many decades ago brought a revolution in the relationships between men and women. Commercial planes also changed the way business is conducted the world over increasing the speed of doing business and accessibility of markets. More recently the so called Information Superhighway has also empowered the modern man in the shopping department. The internet does not only tell the man where to get some "maleness" enhancement products but he wont have to ask his girlfriend or mother what to buy from the cosmetic counter.

Male grooming is also gaining currency. This is partly being attributed to the battle of the sexes. Having to compete with their woman counterpart at the workplace, today's man has come to realize that looking good gives him a competitive edge without necessarily threatening his masculinity. The man also has an idea that in the real battlefield a well dressed soldier has more respect for himself. He also appears more undoubtable to the enemy and dominates him; for good appearance is itself a force. According to the research firm Data Monitor, 73% of American and European males compared to 72% of their female counterparts said that spending time on the mirror as very important or important. The firm also states that cosmetics companies launched 800 men only products in 2006 up from 459 in 2003. Closer home, statistics from South Africa's research firm 80/20 indicate that the number of men taking diet drinks in class almost doubled between 2003 and 2006. They also note an increase in the number of men buying men's clothing in that class increased by a third in the same period.

According to Frik Els in an article on Finweek December 21 2006 issue, this trend has been linked to the growing number of *metrosexual* males. The term was coined in 1994 by a British Journalist Mark Simpson in a report headlined, "*Here Comes The Mirror Men*". According to Simpson, this term refers to an urban male, usually heterosexual who spends a great amount of time and money on appearance and lifestyle. One of the best example of a metrosexual is David Beckham the soccer celebrity- with polished nails, various fancy hairstyles and a sensitive family man character. The other related term also coined by Simpson is - *retrosexual* (sounds like retrogression in sexuality) which refers to a rugged, no nonsense and aggressive man who can still look the part in an evening suit. That is the new James Bond - Daniel Craig for you. A movie loving friend of mine watched *Casino Royale* and referred the new James Bond to as '*James Blonde*'. Frik Els states that this whole scenario is being seen as re-emergence of manliness or meanness. It reminds me of an article in *Cosmopolitan* titled, "*Male ego is a myth*"

All we have seen is a clear testimony that you don't have to be in the business of cars, beer, mortgages or power tools to target the man. If you are targeting the new man the market is clearly cut for you. Probably, as the women catch up with the men on the Olympic tracks, the men will be closing the gap on the cosmetic and grooming department. As this trend continues the paraphrased wise saying, '*What is good for the gander is good for the goose*', has never been so true.

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