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**PENETRATING THE GROWING IT-BASED MARKETING SERVICES IN
AFRICAN MARKETS**

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis was to analyze the various market entry strategies applicable to the African markets and similarly to analyze the Nigerian market readiness and growth level concerning email marketing. The initial idea for this thesis emanated from the management of Emailfactory Oy. The reason for the company's interest in the thesis topic is fundamentally because it has an intention to extend the firms' services to Africa, and hence the company wants a qualitative research carried out to that effect. The thesis therefore was confined to study and present the relevant new-markets penetrating strategies and the analysis/discussion of data derived from answers provided by the potential customers.

Information was collected from various verifiable academic sources. Online materials were used as part of resources for the successful implementation of the thesis. Other sources of information used in the course of this research also included text books and academic articles contained in marketing and management related journals and reports. Furthermore, vital information was also directly obtained from prospective business customers in Nigeria. Therefore, the data collected was analyzed using the qualitative method in arriving at the result, recommendations and conclusions that Emailfactory Oy can employ in its strategic decision making.

The thesis findings revealed that the necessary market conditions for the successful penetration of email marketing services exist in Nigeria. Also, the research showed that Nigeria market is mature enough for email marketing services to flourish, make positive business impacts and achieve organizational goals. In addition, results from the research indicated that the employment of e-mail marketing tools is gradually gaining momentum and appreciation within the business community in Nigeria.

The thesis fulfilled its purpose but not without a few limitations. Future studies on specific feature priorities of customers concerning the services will still need to be embarked upon. Also, intensive quantitative and/or qualitative research would need to be executed in order to determine the market conditions and profitability of other African markets of interests to Emailfactory Oy.

Keywords: Market penetration, Market strategies, Business-to-Business, Potential customers, Email marketing, E-commerce, Internet marketing, Promotion.

Note

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1. Introduction

The African market in general has been proving, over the past decade, to be a fertile ground for all sorts of investments. And one of the new areas where opportunities are beckoning is the information technological-based businesses. While there are undoubtedly many areas where technology business can penetrate profitably in Africa, the concern of this research however, will be restricted to the segment of E-marketing which is a form of direct marketing.

The global trend in the marketing arena is that the conventional method of mass marketing is slowly but gradually losing ground to direct marketing which optimizes effectiveness and returns through the aid of technology. As the use of technology and internet expands exponentially throughout the globe; smart companies and businesses can now disseminate customized information to their customers via technological medium such as e-mail amongst other methods.

The use of internet in Africa has received a substantial surge since the beginning of the 21st century. Consequently, it is creating increasing opportunities for proactive and strategic thinking businesses and organizations in Africa to reach customers and clients alike with accurate and tailored information. Therefore, it is my belief that venturing into African markets is not only right but expediently a business imperative and a bottom-line factor for *Emailfactory Oy*. This is because of the enormous opportunities which are calling for business attention.

The essence of this thesis was to help the client company, *email factory Oy*, answer the question as to whether venturing into the African markets, Nigeria precisely, will serve her any economic and business good or not. Therefore, in order to afford accurate answer, consultations have been made with professionals and experts in the field of marketing and international business and their views and submissions have been duly presented in the academic review section. Also, the potential customers in the aforesaid market of interest have been duly interviewed. Consequently, the thesis has been divided into two major parts; the first being literature review and the second part is research methodology and discussion.

2. Email Factory Oy

Email factory Oy is a Business-to-Business (B2B) marketing Service Company with focus on email advertising niche; specifically, email marketing. The company was founded by two Finnish entrepreneurs. The head office is located in Kuopio, Finland and a branch office is situated in the southern city of Nimes, France. The company is newly established by two young and agile entrepreneurs. According to information available on the company's Webpages, the founder, Sakari Kyrö, started to work in the marketing, advertisement and sales department of a publishing company. He later moved on to the international marketing and PR department so as to use more creative and channel independent tools for clients. Having for a long time been enticed by the online environment, once the opportunity presented itself to become a tech startup entrepreneur, the decision really was not that difficult. Sakari is the Managing Director and the one to contact in non-sales related issues. On the other hand however, the co-founder and Finland representative, Otto Turunen had started to build his career in a local branch of a big bank, but chose to join Email factory Oy, attracted by the possibility of building something new and exciting (Email Factory 2011.)

2.1. Nature of the Business

The major concern of the company is to constantly work to create intuitive and efficient massive newsletter tools for its customers. Traditionally, marketers and entrepreneurs alike have usually employed the use Microsoft Style (MS) editors or ready templates, among other tools in sending newsletters and campaigns to customers. And these methods have been proved to be time consuming, resource wasting and energy dissipating. This is because people spend needless time editing, re-editing text to fit templates, trimming margins, resizing images etc. before they can send their newsletters (Email Factory 2011.)

The company creates tools whereby it is conveniently possible to create and send emails and campaigns to customers in less than two minutes. And this is their biggest goal; to build a simple, efficient, minimalist interface. In other words, it means making

it incredibly easier and faster to get information passed to the intended recipients in the most professional looking manner while ensuring the process is as simple as a pie. Thus, the tool email factory Oy creates is way faster than MS editor and much more flexible than ready templates. All that customers need to do is to create the message and images and sign in to the webpage, drag the images and paste the texts. The tools will edit and resize the image appropriately by itself. Also, it is possible to resize the shapes of the images to a particular size of interest. In fact, there are all sorts of features that give premium experiences which make their business better positioned when compared to competitors (Email Factory 2011.)

2.2. Research Objectives

The central motive for embarking on this research work for *Email factory Oy* is to, first, help determine whether the Nigerian market is profitably matured enough for the company to extend her unique service packages and, second, to also identify and determine strategies of entering into that market. Therefore, the aforesaid central motives form the research problems of the thesis. In the bid that the purpose of the thesis is achieved, certain objectives have been set. The objectives are listed below:

1. Determine which market(s) can best be served by *Email factory Oy*.
2. Reveal opportunities, threat and trends in the target market
3. Interview potential customers in order to get facts from them
4. Analyze the data derived from the interview.

3. Global Marketing and Services

The bedrock for a successful business or organization is a full understanding of the concept of marketing. In other words, for a business to successfully understand customers' needs and develop the products or services that meets such needs, one must have a comprehensive understanding of how marketing works. Malcolm & Adrian (2006, 287) posited that the central idea of marketing is to match the organization's capabilities with the needs of customers so as to achieve the objectives of both parties. To achieve success in the matching process, the company would have to develop its strengths either from the nature of the services offerings or from the way it utilizes the services offerings to give its customers optimum satisfaction. Marketing as a Global discipline has been described by Keegan (2002, 2-4) as a set of concepts, tools, theories, practices, procedures and experience. He further states that although marketing is universal, marketing practice varies from one country to the other; as much as each person is unique, so also is each country. This submission by Keegan therefore suggests that experiences from one country cannot be directly applied to another. Indeed, if factors such as customers, competitors and channels of distributions differ; one would have to adjust the company's marketing mix or program to account for the differences.

3.1. Principles of Marketing- Its Essence

Since almost every meaningful endeavour in life comes with principle, it therefore, means that to be successful in any given endeavour; it then becomes pertinent to adhere and follow the set principles. The same can be said of marketing. The whole essence of marketing is condensed into three abundant principles. These core principles cannot be better explained than how Keegan (2002, 4-8) puts it. They are customer value and the value equation, differential advantage and focus. The three principles will be explained in turns.

- **Customer Value and the Value Equation**

The task of marketing is to create customer value that is greater than the value created by the competitors. Value for the customers can be increased by expanding or improving product or services benefits, by reducing price or the combination of these two elements. A company with cost advantage can employ price as a competitive tool. If a company is creative enough and also has a full understanding of its customer base, such company can offer an utter service package that is superior to competitors'. Also, if a company's products or services have sufficient benefits; its products do not need to be the cheapest in the market place before it can win customers (Keegan 2002, 4; Jobber 2001, 11.)

- **Differential Advantage**

The second great principle of marketing is the differential advantage. When a company offers an utterly unique products or services which consumer perceive and believe that customers or prospective customers cannot get elsewhere, then a company can be said to possess a competitive advantage. The competitive advantage may exist in a company's product, price and the other marketing tools. Impliedly, this means that when a company intends to penetrate a new market, one of the best weapons to deploy is to ensure that a superior product or service is offered at a lower price. The low price will serve as 'bait' for customers who dare to buy the product or service but more importantly, the superb quality will definitely drive home a message. Now, there is no better strategy to penetrate a new market. This is because when customers tried the products or service (enticed by the low price) and discovered the benefits and values derived surpasses the price; they tend to spread the news by word of mouth. And once this happens, the beginning of a success story has begun, if well managed (Keegan 2002, 4; Jobber 2001, 12; Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 9.)

- **Focus**

The last pronounced marketing principle is the focus or concentration of attention as highlighted by Keegan (2002). Just as it is applicable in any given undertaking, marketing also needs focus. Indeed, a lot of focus is required if a company must not just survive but win in the current turbulent and ever increasing competitive business environment. It is somewhat easy to get distracted by the early stage of success stories, but to continually be at the receiving end of favourable feedbacks and positive word of mouth 'advertisements' by loyal customers; a company would need to focus on the need(s) that is (are) most crucial to the customers. When a company is totally focus on delivering value to its customers, then it will assiduously work on constantly improving its services package and also timely meeting customers' requirement. It can therefore, be concisely put that to be successful in the global market place, a firm will need to direct her limited resources on the dynamic environmental opportunities and consumers' needs (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 10).

3.2. Services Marketing Concept

It is commonly believed that marketing is universal and as such, its concepts can be applied to both products and services. However true the statement is, what is also true is that there are distinguishing characteristics between product and service. Therefore, there should be separate approaches to services as well as there should be separate approaches to products. And since the major concern of the research is on services, therefore, only the distinguishing characteristics of services will be discussed here. According to Kotler (2006, 239-243), the services characteristics have been broadly grouped into four. They are:

1. Intangibility- Services are somewhat nonconcrete, cannot be touched or held
2. Heterogeneity- Services are somewhat variable
3. Inseparability- services are produced and consumed at the same time. Services producer are part of the service.
4. Perishability- Services cannot be stored in the warehouse or inventory.

Having highlighted and established that differences subsist between services and products which mean that each deserves its own marketing approach. Now, the question is how does one market services in a result-oriented manner and in a manner that only accounts for and/or concentrates on services marketing alone; no more, no less. The ultimate answer to the stated question can be answered through the questions of Lovelock (1993, 245). The questions are:

1. *What is the nature of the service act?*
2. *What type of relationship does this services organization have with its customers?*
3. *How much room is there for customization and judgement?*
4. *What is the nature of supply and demand for the service?*
5. *How is the services delivered?*

- **The Nature of the Service**

To be able to serve a given market target, definite answers should be provided as regards the nature of the services offerings. In other words, a company must be able to determine what definite benefits the service provides its customers. In addition, a business should also try to determine whether the benefits derived from the service offered is capable to make a difference in the lives of the customers. Even so, it is likewise important as part of the nature of the service to determine how the services offering will get to the final consumers or customers. Also important is how a company manages its relationships with the customers. This suggests that one would have to answer the questions as to whether customers would have to move out of their comfort zones to get the service or the company can provide the service even at the cosiness of customers' households and/or workplaces. By pragmatically providing answers to these questions, a company would be better positioned to strengthen its competitive advantage (Jobber 2001, 684-687; Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 239.)

- **Type of Relationship**

The central point in this question is to help an organization know and determine whether or not a kind of formal relationship exists between customers and the services provider. Also, another underlining factor in this question is for the organization to be able to know whether its services will be provided continuously or in disconnected dealings. It is certainly advantageous for a company to have and maintain some kind of relationships with its customers. This affords the company the ability to understand the unique needs of each customer and as such, services can be tailored to accurately address such unique needs. And again it will be somewhat easy for the company to maintain a sizable database that might be useful for direct marketing. More importantly, maintaining good relationships with customers will lead to increased purchases, decreased cost, and higher quality service and in the long run help build customer loyalty which in turn will lead to increased brand equity (Jobber 2001, 688; Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 20-21; Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 249.)

- **Room for Customization and Judgement**

As mentioned above, good formal relationships with customers will help a service provider to get acquainted with the needs of its customers and subsequently, tailor-made services can then be provided to meet such needs. This is because customers have unique needs and requirements that must be satisfied and met. Service providers have to see each customer or potential buyer as separate from others. However, it is not only sufficient to know the distinctive needs of customers; the real question is the level to which services provided can be tailored. In other words, how flexible is the nature of the service? It then follows that; service flexibility should be substantially factored into the services design stage (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 195).

- **The Nature of Supply and Demand for the Service**

Usually one would expect that fluctuations in the demand for a service will sometimes occur. Therefore, in such situations where demand is relatively high, the question is, how prepared is the company to cater for the increased demand. It is crucial to

remember that one of the characteristics of services is that it cannot be stored. Therefore, service providers are usually faced with the difficulty of meeting customers' demands when supply is inadequate. Apparently, in such situations where demand outstrips supply what happens inadvertently is that customers are being sent away to the competitors. And that is delicate. Importantly, what this question is striking is that a company should be able to know and interpret the pattern of demand for its services. Failure to accurately familiarize with the demand pattern may mark the beginning of a firm's abysmal business performance (Jobber 2001, 687.)

- **How Is The Service Delivered?**

Malcolm & Arian (2006, 253) pointed out that the method by which the service is delivered to customers can be another area where a change of marketing strategy could pay dividends. For a company to appropriately answer the question of how its services are delivered, four questions must first be answered. They are:

1. *Should the service be delivered at a single site or through multiple outlets?*
2. *What is the most convenient type of transaction for customers?*
3. *If the type interaction changed, would the service quality improve or deteriorate?*
4. *Can suitable intermediaries be used in order to achieve multiple outlets (e.g. franchises)?* (Malcolm & Adrian 2006, 259.)

Clearly, every business should know that the delivery of services to customers is key to the total services package. There is no such thing as quality services when customers do not get the services when they need or want them. Also, the means of accessing the services by customers should be simplified by service provider. Under no circumstance should a company lazily allow its services difficult to access by customers. Once it proves difficult for customers to get or use the services they need as at when needed, then they lose confidence in the service provided and subsequently try another service provider (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 409-418.)

4. E-commerce

Internet has significantly changed the ways by which companies and firms conduct businesses today. Because managers desire that messages be better communicated and better channeled to the intended targets, more firms tend to take the advantages accruing from the use of internet marketing, otherwise called e-commerce. Internet provides firms with the technical infrastructure to facilitate an online presence. The internet provides companies with the opportunities to offer current, potential customers and business partners the necessary information about the company and even goods and services of the company. Moreover, electronic commerce includes ranges of online business transactions for both products and services, both B2B and B2C, via the use of internet (Rosen 2000, 2-5).

Timmers (2000, 29) argues that internet has varied combinations of features that make it to be radically different from some other sales medium. The internet is ubiquitous, provides global presence, multimedia and immediate interactivity, digitalization and integration. Importantly, it is more than just a channel that makes selling easily possible. Instead, it is a multipurpose device for building assets that firms can exploit to deliver new benefits to customers. The internet does not only benefit the seller, it customers also benefit a great deal from e-business. It provides customers with lower prices, better service, improved quality and a much wider choice with greater opportunity.

Chaffy (2012, 388) defined e-marketing as the process of coordinating all organizational activities that impact on the customer to deliver customer requirements and achieving marketing objectives through the use of electronic communications technology. One of the major benefit that e-business affords is the capacity to quicken the processes such as selling, buying, manufacturing and distribution. A purely internet dependent company such as Email factory Oy would have to utilize the four virtual spaces; virtual communications space, virtual distribution space, virtual transaction space and virtual market space competences to provide company and service information, communicate with customers make the transaction and make the service available to the customer as at when needed.

But, each of the company's target market may require specific competencies that it can employ to serve the customers and prospective customers better. Therefore, the proper understanding the target market(s) should be considered imperative by business managers (Chen 2001, 109).

4.1. Demand analysis for e-business

To be successful in e-business, a company should be able to determine the current level and future estimation of customer demand for e-business services in the company's target markets. In order to understand and determine this, following questions have to be asked in the different target markets:

- What percentage of customer has access to internet?
- What percentage of customer is willing to buy and pay for the service online?
- What are the barriers to adoption among customers of different channels and can adoption be encouraged?

Answers to the aforesaid questions cannot only be derived from applying the quantitative method. Qualitative research method may be employed. As posited by Variani & Vaturi (2000, 86-97), "Qualitative research provides insights that can be used to inform strategy". Customers' Needs and attitudes towards use of internet for business purposes can be determined through qualitative research (Chaffey 2012, 395).

Conventionally, customers' behavior considers who purchases, how they purchase, when they purchase, the place they buy, and the reason for buying. Possible answers to the questions could depend on first, psychological factors such as the customers' perceptions of the product or business, their reasons for buying, the benefits they intend to derive from buying the products, personality and their knowledge. Second, Social factors at it relates to customer's social class, family role, culture and norms. Potentially, it will be a competitive advantage to a company if it could appreciate these issues better than the competitor. There are two major ways that can be monitored to the advantages of the firm when considering the ways consumers behave on the internet. These behaviors are explicit behavior and implied behavior. The explicit be-

behavior of customers can be determined using the data provided by the users. This will include things such as recorded actions on the site like signing up e-newsletter or placing orders. Also, it can include user profile that is, if registration details are requirements for gaining access to the site of placing an order. Implied behavior is based on data gotten from the observation users' actions during the course of their interaction with the site (Charlesworth 2007, 182-183.)

To offer online services that meet customers' expectation or requirement, the company would have to constantly engage in an on-going approach to improve the efficiency and competence of the e-business offered to the customers. In order for the company to decipher whether its offerings and packages efficiently gives superior values to its customer, the managers must continually answer to the questions of service efficiency and service effectiveness. Under service effectiveness, business managers have to determine whether service being provided meets the organizational goals or not. Moreover, question would have to be asked as to whether the experience and service delivered to customers is acceptable. Again, if superior technologies that can improve the total experience of customers exist, business managers would have to make frantic effort to acquire such technology in the bid not to be out-performed by the competitors. In determining the service efficiency, a company critically needs to know if the operation of the system measured through response speed, usability and cost suitable to lead to service and offerings that afford customers with superior values (Chaffey 2012, 651).

4.2. E-pricing

The provision of easy access to information about goods and services via the internet boosts the buying power of consumers. One of the significant impacts of e-commerce has been to increasingly reduce the control of business marketers over price. Porter (2001, 66) emphasized the benefits of internet for both buyers and sellers alike when he posited that "The great paradox of the internet is that it's very benefits- making information widely available; reducing the difficulty of purchasing, marketing, and distribution; allowing buyers and sellers to find and transact business with one another more easily- also makes it more for companies to capture these

benefits as profits.” In essence, the internet has made it possible for more businesses to have unprecedented access to customers and that in turn makes it easier for customers to subject companies to unprecedented pressures on pricing. This is because failure to diligently manage the pricing strategy alongside other marketing mix in such a way that provides customers and potential customers with superior values and benefits might result into the company losing its customers. Hut & Speh (2004, 138) argues that businesses that with the ability to sell and price their services on the internet must judiciously reconsider their pricing approach and develop better methods for competing on a price-oriented platform or better still, secure a differential advantages in the mind of customers and potential customers.

The pricing strategy of a company should be coherent and supportive of the overall positioning strategy, marketing strategy and possible pre-emptive considerations. Dann & Dann (2011, 180) advanced that one of the first step in setting prices for e-commerce offerings is to review the company's economic and environmental plans so as to understand customers' decision process and the company's own price-positioning strategy. Second of the steps is to consider the behaviour of the customers or would-be customers in the target market and the competition situations in accordance with the service life circle curve. Third, the company should endeavour to appraise the market research initially carried out so as to further understand customers' needs, wants and the augmented services features customers seek after.

5. Market Entry Strategies

Entering a new market is a pivotal point in any company's life span; it can prove to be both an exciting exercise and a rigorous process. Ultimately, the intention for entering into a new market for most companies is expansion. The general assumption is that once a new market is penetrated, more goods or services will be sold which will then lead to more revenue for the company. But as interesting as that may sound, Hollensen (2001, 229) warned that "ill-judged market entry selection in the initial stages of a firm's internationalization can threaten the firm's future market entry and expansion activities". After that the company has chosen the market it intends to penetrate, the next question that should be asked is what method of entry should be adopted.

In order to successfully penetrate a market, there are different modes of entry that are available for a company to choose from; depending on the nature of the business and its interests. An entry mode once adopted is easily institutionalized by a company and then it becomes the model entry mode for entry into another target markets. As postulated by Hollensen (2001, 229), it is common for firms to have their initial mode choice institutionalized over time, as new services are being sold via same established channels and new markets are penetrated employing the same penetrating method, a problematic initial entry mode choice can survive through the institutionalization of this mode. He further stressed that the reluctance to change entry modes once they are in place and the difficulty involved in so doing makes the mode of entry decision a key strategic issue for firms operating in today's internationalizing market place. Appropriately, the question will be what are the approaches to the modes of entry into new markets? Academicians have theorized the modes of entry approaches and have been so divided into three stages, two of which will be discussed here and they are discussed below.

5.1. Internationalization/Transaction Cost Approach

The foundational work for this market entry approach was first established by Coase (1937, 135) He advanced that “a firm will tend to expand until the cost of organizing an extra transaction within the firm will become equal to the cost of carrying out the cost the same transaction means of an exchange on the open market”. The transaction cost theory suggests that a company will likely to carry out those business activities which it undertakes at lower cost through the establishment of an internal management control and implementation system while relying on the market for activities in which independent outsiders such as export intermediaries, agents, and distributors have a cost advantage. It is of course a rudimentary knowledge in business that all kinds of transactions involve cost. But precisely the cost of doing business in a foreign markets can be summarized into four types of cost; search cost, contracting cost, monitoring cost and enforcement cost (Hollensen 2001, 234.)

1. Search cost: As the name suggests is the cost of gathering information to identify and evaluate potential export intermediaries. Even if this cost appear to be prohibitive, knowledge about foreign markets is essential to new market entry success. The truth is that the search cost in the somewhat unorganized markets such as it obtains in Africa may prove exorbitant but that is certainly not a sufficient reason to back off plans to enter such markets.
2. Contracting cost: This type of transaction cost involves the cost of negotiating and preparing agreements between the service producer and the intermediaries and/or agents. Depending on the market of interest, the contracting cost varies hugely.
3. Monitoring cost: This type of cost entails the cost of ensuring that the contracted parties fulfil their contractual obligations and meet the requirements for the success factors established in the agreement.
4. Enforcement cost: Lastly, this cost encompasses the cost of ascertaining that detracting parties are duly sectioned so as to serve as a deterrent to others. Failure to carry out stern enforcement of the agreement between the service provider and the agents might mark the beginning of business failure in the new market (Hollensen 2001, 235; Keegan 2002, 232-236.)

Hollensen (2001, 234-235) added that the fundamental assumption of transaction cost theory is that firm will attempt to minimize the combination of these costs when undertaking transactions. In other words, when considering the most efficient method of organizing new market entry functions, transaction cost theory maintains that company will have to choose the solution which minimizes all the cost when summed up. Controlling the transaction cost of new market entry is a bottom line issue and as such, it should not be treated with any sort of inconsequentiality. Basically, the underlining motive for a business to attempt to extend its services to a new market is to maximize profit. Therefore, if cost is allowed to be unreasonably built up at the initial stage of entry, the goal of profit maximization may be subjected to a major threat.

5.2. Intermediary Opportunistic Behavioural Approach

This concept points the possible undue advantages intermediaries in a new market might want to take from the company entering into the market. Three of the major means by which intermediaries take undue advantage of companies intending to come into a new market are manipulation of receipts, manipulation of the price competitors charged their service and lastly, manipulation of market size information. These kinds of manipulations can successfully occur when the company involved lacks sufficient information about the market it intends to penetrate. Generally speaking, it may be impossible to totally halt the intermediaries from manipulating the firm but the firm should possess the ability to significantly minimize the possibilities of being manipulated. This the company can achieve by possessing substantial knowledge of the target market. On the other hand entering into a strategic alliance or using intermediaries in the target market is essential because such alliance(s) can help the company acquire the necessary skills required to achieve the organizational objectives more efficiently and even at a lower cost or lower risks (Hollensen 2001, 236; Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 272.)

5.3. Market Entry Modes

Having discussed the most relevant new market entry approaches, the next question that naturally comes to mind is what are the modes of entry into new market? Again, scholars in the field of international business and trade have coined three modes of entry. One of the scholars, James (1999, 209) highlighted the mechanism or modes through which extension of services or products into new markets can be achieved. They are:

1. Exporting
2. Licencing
3. Joint venture
4. Direct investment

In essence, the modes of entry listed above highlight method through which a company can sell its services or products into a foreign target market. It therefore follows that a company can choose one or two of the modes, depending on the capacity and the objectives of the company. Importantly, the firm would have to consider and weigh the various options so as to ascertain the entry mechanism that best suits the conditions of the company.

5.3.1. Exporting

Exporting is the marketing and the direct sale of domestically produced goods or services in another country. Exporting is a traditional and well established method of reaching foreign markets. Exporting does not require that a company's product or service (depending on the nature of service) be produced in the target country; no investment in foreign production facilities is required. The major costs are only associated with exporting take form of marketing expenses. Also, in services such as In-

formation technology that does not necessarily require physical presence of material; the firm can export the services to a foreign target market. By exporting the services, the firm will be able to save the cost of setting up facilities in the foreign market. As aforementioned, fraction of the cost saved from not setting up facilities in the foreign market can then be diverted to marketing and promotion (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 275.)

E-commerce has made it rather easy for companies to enter a new or foreign market. Companies might choose to enter e-commerce by exporting via varieties of B2B and B2C channels. For instance, buyers and sellers can interact and transact businesses on eBay which is an online auction site. However, there are novel concerns when a firm employs e-commerce to penetrate a market or an international market place. One of the concerns is time difference. Due to time differences in the world, pressure is placed on the company to provide and meet orders of customers and also provide customer service. Moreover, the firm should have an understanding of international marketing environments so as to develop business relationships further. As maintained by Czinkota & Ronkainen (2010, 286), certain legal concerns for e-businesses such as export control laws exist, particularly if the company deals in strategically crucial software or products. Parts of the legal aspects that must be put in consideration are privacy intellectual property (IP) and security regulations. Importantly, companies should also assume the challenging responsibilities of protecting customers from online scams and other identity theft.

The usage of internet worldwide is fast growing. Even African and the Middle East are experiencing significant increase in usage rate since the advent of this century. Although these parts of the world still have a huge room for improvement concerning internet usage, but as the number of users increase; ecommerce will continue to be a more important channels for economic activities. (Czinkota & Ronkainen 2010, 286)

5.3.2. Licencing

Cavusgil, Knight & Riesenberger (2012, 464) maintain that the two most popular contractual market entry strategies are licensing and franchising. They further described licencing as “An arrangement in which the owner of intellectual property grants another firm the right to use the property for a specified period of time in exchange for royalties or other compensation”. What this connotes is that a firm in the target market can be allowed to use the property of the firm that issues the licence. Such properties are usually not tangible assets. Some of them may include patents, procedures and systems of service trademarks and so on. The licensor would then have to charge the firm at the foreign market, licensee a specific fee for allowing it to use its properties.

The major benefit of this type of market entry mode is that that little or no investment is required on the part of the licensor; therefore, one can easily conclude that the return on investment will be as the cost of providing the service and promotion will be wholly borne by the licensee. However, the downside to this method is that if a licensee is using the trademark and the name of the licensor, care should be taken so that the name of the company (licensor) is not dragged in the mud. This can happen if the licensing deal is made with an unscrupulous licensee. The name of the company can be destroyed in the process of the licensee trying to maximize profit. Therefore, extra caution and measures must be taken to ensure that licensing agreement is not made with the company that cannot be trusted. Also, there are substantial risks involved in licencing. This is because parties involve in the licencing agreement are allowed to share intellectual properties, the licensee may become unscrupulous by using the knowledge gained through the agreement with the licensor to create other products or services (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 276; Keegan 2002, 245)

As opined by Czinkota & Ronkainen (2010, 289), some of the key issues relating to the negotiation of agreements to create a licencing deal includes the scope of the rights conveyed, compensation, compliance, resolution of disputes and the duration and dissolution of the licencing contract. It is pertinent for the parties involved make coherent and comprehensive agreement so as to avoid or possibly reduce trouble along the line.

5.3.3. Joint Venture

Joint ventures are a unique type of tactical alliance where two or more firms agree to share proprietorship of a venture so as to chase common commercial objectives in a target foreign market. Some of the mutual objectives in a joint venture usually include market penetration, risk/reward sharing, technology sharing and joint product or service developments. Other benefits include political connections and distribution channel access that may depend on relationships. Similarly, in the circumstance where a company has a cutting edge technology and does not possess the adequate financial stamina to embark on foreign direct investment by itself, connecting efforts with a partner in the target market will enhance the quick utilization of the technology and as such market entry becomes easier (Keegan 2002, 247-249.) These types of alliances mostly work when the following three conditions are true:

- The parties strategic goals converge while their competitive goals diverge
- The partner's size, market power and resources are small relative to the industry leader
- Partners are able to learn from one another while limiting access to their proprietary skills (Som 2009, 293, Czinkota & Ronkainen 2010, 298.)

However, as it applies in all forms of partnership, there exist problem areas in Joint ventures. One of the grey areas is the trouble usually associated with the implementation and maintenance of business concepts and relationship respectively. Indeed, main problems that mostly surface are conflicts of interest, disclosure of company' confidential information and disagreement over how to portion profits and risks. Although, these problems are constant in any partnership, but it can be avoided if proper planning and effective communication is effected before, during and after birth of the venture (Czinkota & Ronkainen 2010, 298.)

5.3.4. Foreign Direct Investment

“The final mode of entry into global markets is foreign direct investment. The increase in FDIs by global corporations has influenced global trade patterns, although not always in ways that are straight forward; they generally result from a series of complex interactions, which may vary over time” (Som 2009, 292). According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), FDI is described as “an investment made to acquire lasting interest in enterprises operating outside of the economy of the investor”. Further, in cases of FDI, the investor’s purpose is to gain an effective voice in the management of the enterprise (International Monetary Fund, 1993).

“The foreign entity or group of associated entities that make the investment is termed the direct investor” (IMF, 1993). One apparent merit of this type of entry mode is that it affords the firm a high level of control in the operations of the business and equally gives the chance to better know and understand the customers and competitors alike. It is however pertinent to note that entry mode is a very crucial and critical factor in the process of internationalization and as such, the firm should know that no single entry mode is the ‘ideal’ mode but that different modes of entry are at times more applicable under different situations. Therefore, the onus rests on the firm to measure its capability, resources, strategic goals and object in the light of the different new market entry modes (Ghauri & Cateora 2010, 275).

6. B2B Promotion Strategies

As Dann & Dann (2011, 186) submit, the promotional mix consists of six techniques designed to raise awareness and influence attitudes towards products, brands and the organization through personal and impersonal media. It is generally believed by businesses across the globe that if a business, its services and brand must be made known to the targeted potential customers, the machinery of promotion has to be set in motion. However, the question does not only stop at whether a firm recognizes the potency of the various promotional tools or not but how strategic-driven is the firm's promotional programmes. For example, it would only be rational to think and conclude that a company whose main customers are other businesses (i.e. B2B) will have to design its promotion strategically different from a company whose major customers are final consumer (i.e. B2C).

The difference between a promotion programme that works and the one that does not work is the practical implication. The seemingly basic essence of promotion is to tell the target customer what the company offers, the benefits to customers, why it is far better than the competitors' and also to ensure that customers buy the product or service so as to make revenue for the company. Therefore, if that basic idea will be achieved, Karl (2005, 289) enjoined that Strategy-driven promotions should be seen to focus on overcoming barriers to purchase. He further gives five substantive instructions to a strategy driven promotion. They are:

1. Don't ask the promotion programme to do the whole job
2. The promotion has to be creative and go beyond the conventional
3. Promotion has to be customer driving (borrow interest from something the customer really cares about)
4. Promotion has to be measurable (if you can't measure it, you can't learn from it) and;
5. It should focus on brand enhancing (Karl 2005, 290.)

Promotion is one element of the marketing mix that can be expanded into a complex subset of elements, with each of the elements possessing its own merits and

demerits for the delivery of message. However, the contemporary promotional mix consists of eight different forms of marketing communications that that work well within the overall frame work of e-marketing and B2B marketing. And they are highlighted as follow: (only the relevant mixes to this study will be discussed here.)

1. Advertising
2. Direct marketing
3. Personal selling
4. Point of sale/point of purchase displays
5. Publicity
6. Public relations
7. Sales promotions
8. User-generated content (Dann& Dann 2011, 198.)

5.1. Advertising

Kotler and Armstrong (1993, 406) defined advertising as any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. For the purpose of advertising to be effectively achieved, the firm's marketing management team should consider five crucial decisions when developing the advertising program. The five decisions as created by Kotler & Armstrong (1993, 409) are listed below:

1. Objective setting- this should contain the communication objectives as well as sales objectives
2. Budget decisions- the company should only spend money that it can afford to achieve the sales goals
3. Message decision- in this section, a firm would have to consider factors such as message generation, message evaluation/selection, and message execution.

4. Media decision- under this category, the marketing team/ manager of the company do need to determine the reach of the media to be chosen, how frequent the message or campaign be aired, which media vehicle to be adopted, and finally what is the best time to send the message to the targeted audience.
5. Campaign evaluation- Lastly, the company should be able to assess impact the advertising has been able to have on sales and revenue.

When advertising a company's services in a foreign market one should be taking as to the cultural and structural differences. While it is not impossible to see some companies transfer their marketing campaign or advertising verbatim to a foreign country, it seems more logical to adapt the company's advertising to meeting the requirements of the overseas market. The reason being, cultures differ. And also, nations equally vary in terms of regulations relating to advertising practices. Therefore, it is indeed required that the company adapts its advertising program to account for the restrictions and regulations in a particular market or country. (Kotler & Armstrong 1993, 409).

5.2. Sales Promotion

Cummins (1999, 11) pointed out that sales promotion can be thought to be just a marketing function. It is far better to perceive of it as part of the creation and strengthening of relationships that contribute to the success of the business. Sales promotion tries to inform potential customers of the reason to make purchase of a service now. Convincingly telling a potential customer via whatever means of the reason why he/she needs a service now and not on a later date can help spur the beginning of a business to business relationships. To corroborate this argument, Dann & Dann (2011, 204) postulated that the one essential advantage of sales promotion is that it encourages goodwill among consumers and tends to stimulate immediate sales. Of the various traditional sales promotion techniques that there are coupons, prize promotions, competitions, business promotion and free samples; the latter two

will be discussed here because of their relevance to the B2B promotion in services marketing. (I.e. free sample and business promotion)

1. Free samples help to encourage consumer test of the firm's services. For example, Email factory Oy offers free trials of its service to potential customers online. Once a would-be customer tries the service and the service proved to be of good value that will help cement a long term relationship with the customer. More importantly, if the company service is a new one, free sample is a strong technique to lure business-customers to start patronizing the company. Kotler and Armstrong (1999, 425) categorically reasoned that sampling is the most effective way to introduce a new service.
2. Business promotion: colossal amount of Euros are being spent on business promotion to business or industrial customers by large corporations and Small and medium sized companies alike across Europe and the world at large. The reason for this is that it helps the companies, small or big, to create leads, stimulate purchases, reward customers, and motivate sales people. (Kotler & Armstrong 1999, 428) However, one important tool of business promotion stands out for the B2B promotion, it is trade show. Trade show is organized to enable the gathering together of buyers and sellers of services in a particular place for the purpose of making contacts, inducing sales and building relationships. The trade show provides the opportunity to discover potential customers and display and teach how a service can be used. Similarly, trade shows present a situation in which the company sales team can meet directly with decisions makers and buyers from prospective clients (Kenneth & Donald 2010, 213).

5.3. Direct Marketing

A marketing tool which is employed to make direct contact with customers and potential customers alike without the use of any intermediary is termed direct marketing.

Direct marketing is largely believed to be very effective in the process of gaining new and maintaining old customers. Statistically speaking, about 60% of a typical direct marketing budget is being used for winning new customers while only 40% are used to keep existing customers. Levy (2004, 1-5). Direct marketing is commonly used by marketers to gain instant response from customers or potential customers via the traditional mail, e-mail or phone. Dann & Dann (2011, 201) posit that direct marketing has an unsurpassed ability to be employed by companies for narrowly defined targeted marketing because messages can be tailored and send directly to the target recipient. The use of direct marketing by marketers is greatly increasing even in the developing countries as Nigeria. This is because the number of people gaining access to the internet is on the record high. Therefore, marketers are seizing the opportunity of record breaking internet access in Nigeria to send customized messages/campaigns to customers or potential customers via e-mail and other electronic media.

5.4. Personal Selling

Blythe (2009, 193) described personal selling as the interactive process whereby a buyer and a seller negotiate an exchange process, the process usually being carried out in a face-to-face encounter between the parties. The significant importance of personal selling is that it offers the company to have two way communications with the potential buyer(s) of the company's service(s). However, to ensure that advantages of personal selling are fully maximized, the company's representative would have to ensure that the message being delivered is tailored to the subject that is of significant importance or interest to the would-be customer. Drucker (1973, 56) stated that "the aim of marketing is to make selling superfluous". Therefore, the responsibility rests on the company and its representatives to identify what exactly the needs of customers are so that such needs can be adequately addressed and catered for.

It suffices to say that personal selling is a very effective tool to market the company's services but what is more effective is the quality or the perceived quality, unmatched benefits of the service being rendered to the business customer. Business customers want to know what problem the service can help solve and how will the service help

them serve their customers better than the competitors. Blythe (2009, 195) further suggested that “the emphasis in selling practice is not on telling prospects about the products, but on asking questions about the prospects needs. Persuasive talks are not necessary if appropriate questions are asked: questions not only help in finding customers’ needs, they also help to lead the discussion in a particular direction”.

5.5. Public Relations

This is a deliberate, planned and sustained effort by the company in order to establish and maintain an understanding between an organization and any group which the company needs to communicate. In the entire life span of a company, there is constantly a need to always communicate with the public in one way or the other. The company may find it difficult to accomplish its organizational goal if it fails to identify who the company’s publics are and equally identify the mechanism and strategy of communication. The possible ‘publics’ of a business may include employees, trade unions, the general public, customers, media, government, pressure groups etc. The essence of public relations is to influence the ‘publics’ opinions about the company. And this can be achieved by taking steps to adequately reinforce positive public opinions about the company and on the other hand, the company has to make copious effort to neutralize the public opinions that are quite unfavorable. For a company to ensure that favorable opinions are reinforced and unfavorable ones are counteracted, it is has to endeavor to make abundant information available to its ‘publics’. The means to therefore make ample information available can be through the six points listed below (Dann & Dann 2011, 203.)

1. Trade press releases
2. The company’s website
3. Business press releases
4. The company brochures and videos
5. Newsletters and company magazines
6. Intranet and emails etc.

5.6. User-Generated Content

This is a form of mouth-to mouth marketing and as such, it is one of the most effective, cheapest B2B promotional tools. This is because there is nothing more persuasive to a prospective customer than having a customer that is so keen on a company's work to the extent that he/she will build his/her own advertising campaign to promote the company's services on its behalf. Now, it is worthy to state that a company offering services in the B2B world has to be extra careful in its promises. When a company is selling to another business, the selling company should note that the service being sold to the buying company will in effect have an input in the products or services that the buying company will offer to its customers (Dann & Dann 2011, 205.)

So, should the selling company's services fail to deliver the solution it promised, it therefore, inadvertently means that the buying company will be failing in its promise to its customers. And once that happens, word will spread. So, the company should do everything it can to ascertain that if words must spread from its customers, it must good words. Because unfavorable comments from customers to prospective customers will be hard to neutralize. Hence, the most basic thing the company can do to prevent unfavorable 'viral marketing' is to one, provide a qualitative service package that solves the customers' business problems. Second, Services must be delivered as at when needed without needless interruptions. Third, customers must be convinced they are getting values for their monies and, lastly, customers must be of the opinion that the company's services support them to serve their customer better than the competitors. The message, format and content of a promotion have to be balanced. This is because "The objective of all elements of the promotional mix is to say the right thing to the right person at the right time and have them receive, perceive and interpret the message in the right way" (Kiani 1998, 94).

6. Research Methodologies

In the course of the research process, an initial pre-study of the African markets was undertaken where secondary data was collected and analysed. The pre-study objectives were achieved. The objectives are first, to research and gather sufficient information and understanding of the general market conditions such as determining whether the market size of the target market is big enough to penetrate and the political/economic factors among other factors. Second is to report the preliminary report to the client company for approval to commence the major research work. Remarkably, the client company was pleased with the preliminary findings provided them and consequently gave the permission to embark on the research.

Subsequently, to achieve the goal of the research and equally answer the research questions that will help Emailfactory Oy launch the company's services in Africa; there is the pertinent need to carry-out literature review. Therefore, collection of literature on the entire concept relating to the area of study was done and thus the theoretical framework was designed.

The literature review was chiefly centred on theories and strategies that have been coined by scholars and academicians in the world of business. Information retrieved in this respect was sourced from sundry course books, publications, research papers and articles. Moreover, internet was also an important part of information gathering sources. No matter how accurate and copious information gathered from the secondary data and course books may seem, Cooper and Schindler (1998, 596) warned that the information collected from the secondary data might not be sufficient enough to answer to the specific needs and questions of the research that is being embarked upon.

For that reason, it becomes expedient to corroborate and /or complement the secondary data with a well-planned and executed primary research. And rightly so, a primary research was chosen, the objectives of which are listed below:

1. Recognize the target companies' nature or line of business and activities

2. Determine and analyse the needs of the researched firms
3. Establish whether the current services the surveyed companies received is satisfactory or they crave for a better service package delivery.
4. Draw-up conclusions and make suggestions as to how the needs of the potential customers may be met.

In academic research, both primary and secondary research can be employed for the purpose of reaching the set target. Primary research can be divided into two broad groups; quantitative and qualitative and both can be used in a single research depending on the research problem(s) and the researcher. But, only qualitative research method has been adopted for this research. While quantitative method concerns itself with numerical information and statistics, on the other hand, qualitative research is about exploring issues and answering questions- the questions of 'why'. More importantly, the reason for adopting the qualitative method over the quantitative method is to be able to gain significant insight into the surveyed firms' business attitudes, concerns and motivations; to understand why the potential customers will need the client company's (Email Factory Oy) services. The qualitative research method allows for open-ended questions which in turn, permit the respondents to express their concerns, feelings and reveal their positions on a particular issue.

6.1. Secondary Data Analysis

Czinkota & Ronkainen (2010, 34) state that "The main dimensions of a market can be captured by considering variables such as those relating to the population and its various characteristics, infrastructure, geographical features of the environment, and foreign involvement in the economy". Therefore, to successfully determine which market to enter, there is the need to execute market analysis concerning the markets under consideration. And the purpose of executing market analysis is to help understand the attractiveness of a certain market in an attempt to weigh the opportunities and strengths against the threats and weaknesses of the market. Therefore, some of the important factors that should be meticulously considered, among others, are market size of the target market, political and economic environment.

6.1.1. Market Size and the Growth of Internet/E-Commerce in Africa

Since it is basically not possible to use email without internet, therefore, the market size of emailing services can be measured by the numbers of internet users. The latest data released by the internet world statistics reveals that the total numbers of internet users in Africa currently stand at 118,609,620. Meanwhile, the figure of users in the 2000 statistics stood at 4,514,400. Comparatively, one can see the astronomical surge in the usage of internet between the year 2000 and 2011, in Africa. To be precise, the percentage difference between the 2000 and 2011 figures is approximately 2527% (Internet World Statistics 2011).

As can be seen from figure 1 below, there are sharp differences between African countries internet users. For example, while internet users in Nigeria (the highest internet users in the continent) currently stand at about 44million, the next country on the list, Egypt stand at approximately 20 million users.

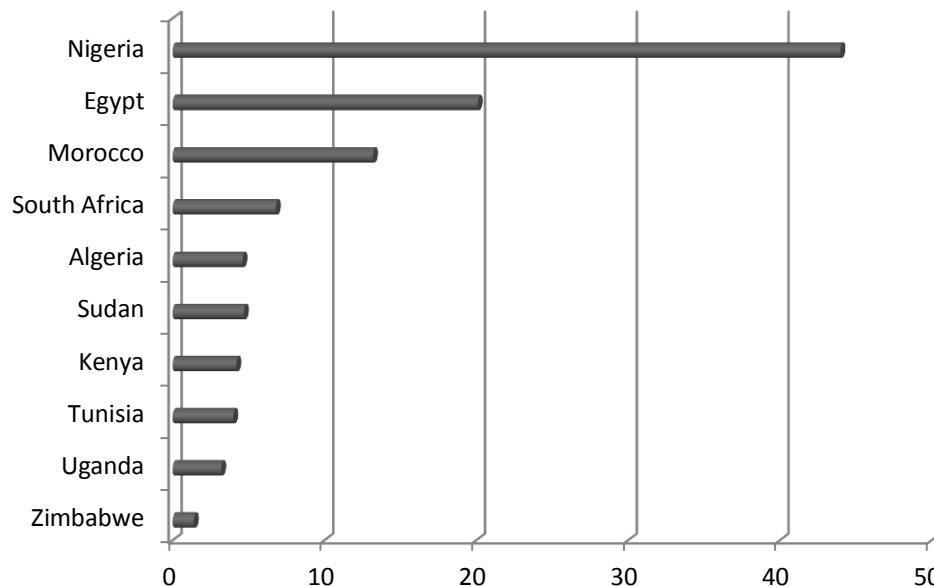


FIGURE 1. Africa Top Internet Countries in Millions (Internet World Statistics 2011)

The sum total of internet users in the countries listed above which represent the ten topmost users in Africa is app. 105.2 million. While it is undoubtedly a staggering number any serious-minded business would not want to jettison, I think it is advisable to experiment the probable service(s) in the country which has the highest number of internet users. And the country is Nigeria with internet users currently at about 44 million. It is advisable that the Nigerian market should be penetrated first and if success is recorded the identified success factors can then be transferred or replicated in the other favorable African markets. Now that the market size has been determined, the next critical factor that must be considered is the environmental factors.

6.1.2. The Political and Economic Environment

Strategic business experts do not just venture into any market only because of the enormity of its size. There are more important factors to be aptly considered or measured. Environmental factors are some of the most crucial factors to be analyzed. The analysis of these factors will enable Emailfactory Oy to understand some of the external forces that might have impact on the business and mostly, businesses do not have control over such forces. For the purpose of understanding the external factors that might impact Emailfactory Oy business operations in the said target market, secondary data concerning the political and economic environment was collected and analyzed. The two factors are discussed and analyzed below.

6.1.2.1. Political

Possible external forces to take into consideration are political stability, competition regulation, type of government, future legislation to mention but the relevant ones. Bala (2000) submitted that political stability can be described as the continuation of the exercise of power by those freely elected by the people of a country for specific periods with definite mandates which conform to the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy clearly defined in chapter II of the Constitution. Ghauri & Cateora (2010, 122) claim that "A government controls and restricts a com-

pany's activities by encouraging and offering support or by discouraging and banning its activities- depending on the objectives of the government. A country's overall goals for its economic, political and social systems form the base for the political environment. At the top of the list of political conditions that concern foreign businesses is the stability or instability of prevailing government policies". Candidly, Nigeria has been experiencing relative political stability since the inception of democratic rule in 1999. There have been elections and democratic transfers of power from one leader to the other in all the three tie of the Nigerian government. Let me set the record straight here, there has never been a time in Nigeria political history where there have been three consecutively civil administration transitions in a democratic manner without any sort of military intervention. As a matter of fact, it is the first time this is happening since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 (Dawudu 2010).

As such, one can conclude that Nigeria has enjoyed some relative political stability since 1999 up till date. In contrast, that doesn't mean that there have not been some pockets of crisis here and there in the Nigerian political arena but, that can similarly be said of any other nation on earth. The bottom line however is that Nigeria can be referred to as being political stable, in relative terms though; given the current political trend. To lend credence to the claim of relative political stability in Nigeria, I will provide few statistics, obtainable in the webpages of Economy Watch, to that effect:

- **In Economics Terms**

1. Nigeria reached a GDP growth rate of 8.394% from 0.474% within the period of 11 years (1999-2010)
2. Per capita income has increased from \$310.475 in 1999 to \$1,389.31 in 2010
3. Projection of annual growth rate stands at an average figure of over 6%
4. Nigeria receives the largest amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Africa.
5. Nigeria's foreign direct investment (FDI) reached \$11 billion in 2009 from \$1.14 billion in 2001 making her the 19th largest recipient of FDI in the world (Economy Watch 2011.)

- **In Political Terms**

1. Successful transitions of three consecutive civilian rules from 1999 up till date; the first time it will be experienced in the history of the country.
2. Increased respect for the rule of law
3. The last general election was internationally acclaimed to be a substantial improvement to the previous elections of 2007.
4. Increased phenomenon entrenchment of democratic principles in the Nigeria politicking.
5. Drastic diminished restiveness in the Niger Delta region- the oil-producing region in Nigeria (Economy Watch 2011.)

6.1.2.2. Economical

There are somewhat many variables to be considered under the economical factor. But, the most relevant variables to Emailfactory Oy's business interest in Nigeria will be precisely addressed here. They are listed below:

1. Disposable income
2. Employment level
3. Economic growth/Long-term prospects for the economy.

- **Disposable Income**

I wish to affirmatively suggest that one of the most important economic variables to be critically considered by any business before launching into a new market is the strength of potential customers' inflation-adjusted income, after tax. The more of a product or service a customer can buy ultimately depends on the disposable income. In other words, the higher the customers' disposable income, the higher the demand for products or services. Factually, Nigeria is universally recognized as a developing

country with gigantic socio-economic challenges to grapple with plus the seemingly inadequate ingenuity, creativity and political will to solve problems. Since obtaining accurate figure to represent the disposable income of a household in Nigeria maybe somewhat impossible, it may therefore, be wise to actually weigh the purchasing power of a Nigeria worker through the spectacle of the wages or salary a worker nets home at the end of each month.

The president of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan (24 March 2011) signed the new national minimum wage bill into law. The new minimum wage law raised the monthly pay of the least paid worker in Nigeria from 7,500 'Naira' (Nigeria Currency) to 18,000 Naira. In effect, that implies that a "level 1" worker in Nigeria will see a whopping 140% rise in his or her income. Bear in mind that a level one worker in Nigeria is one without any educational qualifications. So people with, at least, secondary school certificate will earn far more than the 18,000 naira minimum. Furthermore, graduates of higher institutions are normally placed between "level 6 and 8" this latter category usually earns over 100% more than the former category (Economy Watch 2011).

Logically, as Nigerian workers' income increases dramatically, purchasing power or disposable income increases automatically. But one sure fact is that, taking into account the 'Nigeria factor', one will not see a commensurate and/or dramatic surge in the consumers' disposable income when compared to the increase in income. The reasons for that are not far-fetched. There is a double-digit inflation among other Nigerian factors that are not worth mentioning here. However, what is certain is that Nigerian disposable income is high enough for most businesses to come in to Nigeria and make reasonable profit. And the good news is that the disposable income will continue to be on the rise in the foreseeable future as Nigeria works hard to reach the "20:2020 goal". (The goal to be part of the 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020)

- **Employment level**

The determination or knowledge of a country's employment level is important in making decision as regards entering the market or otherwise. This is because the higher the employment level, the higher the consumer spending in any economy, ceteris

paribus. And in the other hand if unemployment level increases, it will have adverse effect on the general consumer spending of any nation. In Nigeria, the Overall unemployment rate amounted to 19.7% of total Labor Force in March 2009, indicating a sharp increase from 14.9% in March 2008. See table1 below.

I must admit that 19.7% unemployment rate is incredibly high. In fact, that means several millions of employable people are out of work. But one calming fact as can be seen from table 2 is that the age group (25-44) which is the most active segment of the economy has a lower unemployment rate that stands at 17%, 3% point lower than the total group. Basically, the age group (25-44) will be the most significant and important segment to the Emailfactory Oy (National Bureau of Statistics 2011).

TABLE 1. National Unemployment Rates (National Bureau of Statistics 2011)

Year	Rates (%)
2000	13.1
2001	13.6
2002	12.6
2003	14.8
2004	13.4
2005	11.9
2006	12.3
2007	12.7
2008	14.4
2009	19.7
Total	139

TABLE 2. National Unemployment Rates (National Bureau of Statistics 2011)

Age Group	Unemployment Rate (%)
15-24	41.6
25-44	17
45-59	11.5
60-64	16.7
Total	86.8

In contrast, it is true that the unemployment rate in Nigeria is too high and unsustainable but what is also true is that 80.3% of the total work force is gainfully employed in various industries and sphere of life. With that figure, it is only fair to submit that such employment level can constitute a profitable and actionable market for any business to invest in, given the teeming population of the country.

- **Economic Growth/ Long Term Prospects for the Economy**

The growth rate and prospects for the future of a particular country should be of a major concern to any business intending to enter it. Nigeria has recorded a substantial GDP growth rate of well over 6% since 2009 and it is projected that the growth rate will reach 8.46% in the last quarter of 2011. Equally, it is expected that the Nigerian economy will continue to experience steady growth rate in the years to come. Therefore, most economists will agree that an economy steadily growing at a rate of about 6%-7% annually has great prospects for the future if resources are well managed (National Bureau of statistics 2011.)

The steady growth, if properly managed, will translate to gradual poverty alleviation, diminishing unemployment rate; more people economically engaged. And in turn, there will be significant consumer spending. And in any economy where there is increased consumer spending, entrepreneurial and investment activities will be positively impacted thereby making it possible for hard-working businesses to succeed. Also, the governor of Central Bank of Nigeria was quoted to have confirmed that the growth rate of Nigeria which is currently about 7% annually will double over the next decade (Channels Television 2011).

Concerning the outlook for Internet penetration level in Nigeria, the chief executive of 'Main One', Funke Opeke, told newsmen of Nigerian Channels Television on the 14th of May, 2011 that internet penetration is estimated to triple over the next 18-24 months with a new undersea cable linking West Africa to Europe increasing access to firms and households. Funke Opeke, further states that internet access penetration is expected to increase to 35-40 % from the current 11% as more people in Africa's most populous nation utilize technology to improve their operations. Also, she maintained that broadband usage would mirror mobile phone usage which has around 50-60 percent penetration levels (Channels Television 2011.)

6.2. Survey Method

An open ended questionnaire was designed for data collection. The questionnaire was designed using the Google document for the main purpose of ensuring that the questionnaire is as professional as possible. There are a few principles that guided the design of the questionnaire. The principles are listed below:

1. Since the potential respondents are entrepreneurs and business executives, the questionnaire has to have a professional presentation to it.
2. A comprehensive but concise introduction and description of the purpose and benefits of the research has to be provided
3. A professional cover letter has to accompany the questionnaire

4. The questions will be limited to only deriving insights and answers that are relevant to the purpose of the research.

6.2.1. Questionnaire Design

As aforementioned, the questionnaire was designed with the aid of Google document. The main purpose of adopting the Google document as a questionnaire design tool is to ensure simplicity. The questionnaire leaves the respondents with no task other than to fill in the answers and choose the options of returning the questionnaire. Furthermore, to ensure that respondents do not encounter difficulties returning the completed questionnaires, two options were made available. Respondents can either choose to return the completed questionnaire via e-mail or by simply clicking the 'submit' button at the foot of the questionnaire. Once completed and submitted the researcher receives the completed questionnaire by email.

To ensure a relatively high response rate, the concept of KISS (keep it short and simple) was imbibed. It was assumed that when a questionnaire is unnecessarily too long, respondents might be discouraged by that. Therefore, the questions that were thought to not provide relevant answers towards the theme of the survey were duly eliminated. In all, seventeen precise questions were contained in the questionnaire. Furthermore, conscious effort was made to make the questionnaire look interesting to the would-be respondents. The design was simple but colourful; the layout/format also fulfils the academic requirements. And in terms of questions ordering, effort was made to ensure that the more simple questions come first and subsequently followed by the relatively less simple ones.

6.2.2. Questionnaire Style

As hinted above, the questionnaire style adopted for the research is the open-ended format. While the close format restricts or specifies the categories that can be selected, open ended format give respondents the opportunity to provide lengthy

response to a questions such that will allow them to accurately express their thought on a given theme. The basic reason for adopting this method over the closed format hinges on the central purpose of this research. This is because it is believed that the open-ended method stands the chance of getting better result than its counterpart in this research. However, either format can be used in any given research but the choice of what format employable depends on the researcher, the motive driving the research and the result he/she aims to get.

6.3. Sample Design

Malhotra (1998, 65) describes target population as a subgroup of the elements or list from which sample is drawn for the purpose of representing the whole target population. Besides, Crask, Fox & Stout (1995, 81) articulated that defining a target population in a proper manner is indeed a pertinent step in the successful design of the research work. Therefore, in strict accordance to the research objective, the target population is drawn within the target market which the client company intends to serve. The major target is the Nigerian business market. The researcher only recognized the small and medium sized firms dealing in services and products in Nigeria as the target population. The target population, for the purpose of this research, is however divided into three definite subgroups in order to fulfill some certain criteria. The subgroups are:

1. Abuja FCT(Federal Capital Territory) – Representing the northern part of Nigeria
2. Lagos – Representing the western part of the country
3. Port Harcourt/ Calabar – Representing the south-east of Nigeria

It is however worth mentioning that Nigeria is geo-politically divided into six zones but only three are considered here to have met the criteria for a target population in this research work. The core reason for limiting the regions into three is first, to ensure that the research keeps faith with its objective i.e. not needlessly going over board, second is to make sure that only the regions that meet the set criteria constitutes the target population. Therefore, the set criteria are:

1. Level of infrastructure
2. level of business activities
3. Usage of internet

Evidences from all sorts of sources reveal copiously that the abovementioned cities best meet the set conditions. Similarly, it is relevant to also note that it serves no economic benefit to just generalize the entire target market as appropriate target population for the research without setting simplified conditions and selecting the ones that will afford the best result.

On the contrary, it is needful to mention the group that are excluded from the target population and why. First, the multinational companies and big corporations are excluded from the population; the reason being that Nigeria is the largest black nation on Earth and as such these big business entities have millions of customers such that the client company might not have sufficient capacity to serve. Second, it is absolutely inessential to include businesses that are yet to take advantage of the modern business technology such as the internet, email etc. in their daily operations in a survey that is only intended for a company who plans to help other companies maximize and/or optimize the use of modern information technology like e-mail marketing, for example.

6.4. Questionnaire Distribution

The questionnaire was distributed via emails contacts of the targeted sample. 94 firms in Nigeria were sent the questionnaire. But out of the 94 contacts, 7 emails addresses turned out to be incorrect as the email would not go through. So, that brings the number of the questionnaire respondents, in other words, target population, to a total of 87.

In the effort to guarantee that the most accurate data is derived from the research, the questionnaires were addressed to the manager or the marketing personnel of the firm. Moreover, respondents were humbly requested to make sure that the completed questionnaire were submitted and/ returned within two weeks of receiving the questionnaire. Duly, after a week the questionnaire were distributed, reminder letters were sent to those contact that are yet to remit the completed survey form. In fact, as at 3rd of November, 2011, 41 completed questionnaires have been returned. After wards, 8 completed forms were equally returned. Therefore, the total number of completed questionnaire returned after three weeks of sending them to the targeted population is 49, circa fifty six per cent of the total questionnaire received by intended respondents.

7. Results and Analysis

In this section, the findings based on the research executed will be presented. For the purpose of achieving the goal of this research, only what questions deemed relevant were contained in the questionnaire. For example, unnecessary attention was not accorded to the surveyed companies' background information. Information such as main business fields, the age of the company, numbers of personnel were considered somewhat irrelevant in this research. The background information was limited to only the names of the surveyed companies and the portfolios of the respondent. However, the chief focuses of the research were to:

1. Determine how interested in the client company's services the potential customers are.
2. Know from the potential customers whether the Nigerian market is ripe enough for this type of marketing services
3. Hear from would-be customers the possible impact the services will have on their businesses
4. Decipher which features of the service, in particular, meet the requirements and/or need of the businesses interviewed
5. Verify the level of competition in this field of business
6. Validate the Nigerian business culture and perception as it concerns e-marketing
7. Ensure the frequency of the users of e-marketing.
8. Afford the surveyed businesses the opportunity to mention the features and attributes of the service they perceive may not be applicable in Nigeria, at least, currently.
9. Afford the prospective customers the opportunity to value the service i.e. to state price they can pay for the service.

The above-mentioned points guided the formulation of the questions contained in the questionnaire distributed to the respondent companies and frantic effort was made to guarantee that questions that only point to providing answers to the aforesaid points were contained in the questionnaire.

7.1. Background Information of Surveyed Companies

As briefly hinted above, the questionnaire was straight to the point. And as such, the background information only took account of the names of the companies and the positions occupied by the respondents. Two questions were asked under this section and they are:

- 1. Please give the name of your company*
- 2. What position do you occupy in this company?*

Characteristically, most medium-sized companies in Nigeria tend to adopt company names that suggest their line and field of business they are doing. Therefore, from the names of the firms, one can easily decipher which field of business they deal in. So, it was deemed not necessary to include questions asking the respondents to mention their line of business. On the other hand, it is essential to know the positions of the respondents. Since the theme of this research is marketing related, it was deemed necessary to ensure that people who provide answers to the questionnaire are people who can actually make or impact marketing decisions in the organization. This research reveals that 86% of the respondents are managing directors and proprietors while the remaining 24% respondents are the marketing managers. The reason for this is that the target population of the research is small and medium-sized businesses. In most of these companies there are no offices for marketing managers. But for the few medium-sized businesses, it is possible that separate office are created for marketing managers and that explains the huge gulf of difference between managing directors and marketing managers as respondents.

7.2. Potential Customers' Interest in Employing the Service and Usage Frequency

In accordance with the goal of this research, the researcher deem it crucial to verify and determine the level of interest potential customers have concerning the type of service that the client company, Emailfactory Oy intend to introduce to the Nigerian market. In order to achieve this, four probing questions were coined and the questions have been answered.

3. How interested would you be in using the described service? (Question 4)

It is quite pleasing that approximately 67% number of respondents responded to this question. A critical analyses of the answers provided pointed to a general positive conclusion concerning the interest they have towards the possible use of the service. Furthermore, while 15% of respondents show some sort of optimism, the data revealed that about 45% of respondents are cautious in their optimism but convincingly express their willingness to try the service when it is available. But an approximately 7% of respondents did not show any significant interest in the service.

4. *Have you ever used emailing tools as a medium for marketing your products or services? (Question 7)*

In this section of the question, an hundred percent response was given. The reason for a rare hundred percent answers to a question in the questionnaire could be as a result of the construction of the question. This particular question is the question seven in the questionnaire and respondents are only requested to click a 'yes' or 'no' answer box. The data received shows that 32 % of businesses interviewed have employed the tool in question. One significant clue derived from this section is that the idea of email marketing is not strange to the Nigerian marketing environment. And this confirms the views put forward under the literature review which shows a staggering increase in the numbers of internet users in Nigeria and Africa, by extension. Again, a serious examination of the data shows that the email marketing as a promotional tool is gaining momentum in the world of marketing in Nigeria. But the fact that some businesses, as revealed by the data, are yet to start using the email marketing tools also testify to the issue that this marketing tool is still at its nascent stage in and that it has not become a general wide-spread business norm in Nigeria.

5. How often do you use services from this service category? (Question 8)

This question helps to further probe the behaviors of businesses that claim to have ever used or are using the email marketing tools. Again the question was formulated in a multiple choice format. And respondents can only answer to the questions only if they answer 'yes' to the immediate previous question. In other words, it concerns only those that claim to have used the tool. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they are frequent users, occasional users or whether they rarely use it. Additional option which allows the respondents to write their usage behaviors was also included. The analyses of the data vividly show that businesses are almost equally divided between frequent users and occasional users. While a whopping 46 % indicated that they rarely use the tool, 29 % revealed that they are occasional users. The frequent users represent 25 % of the respondents.

6. What other types of marketing tools do you employ? (Question 9)

In effect, this question was asked so as to have a good understanding concerning the general marketing behaviors of the firms in the target population. Also, another reason for posing this question was to check the relative inclination of businesses in Nigeria to the traditional marketing methods of marketing. Indeed, the data analyses validate the submissions in the literature review that companies in Nigeria, big and small alike are still much dependent on the traditional marketing practices. This particular question got a substantial 78 % response rate. The data suggests that over 95 % of businesses interviewed in Nigeria employ the use of conventional means such as postal, radio, telephone, TV etc.

7.3. Features and Attributes Considered Imperative for the Service

Since the Nigerian market is basically different in structure and form, it is therefore, vital for the company to know the features of the service that the Nigerian market

prioritizes the most and which ones are less attractive and applicable. The essence of this is to help the company determine, strategize and tailor her service in manners that match the unique needs of this market. Therefore, to successfully ascertain that the probable unique needs of the Nigerian market are duly met, respondents were asked the following three questions: They are discussed and analyzed below.

*7. What features/attributes of the service do you consider imperative?
(Question 3)*

The form and pattern the answers provided follow was somewhat interesting. This is because a little above 50 % of respondents did not indicate which feature of the service they consider imperative. A clinical examination of the answers revealed that majority of the business owners and marketing managers alike are mostly interested in an emailing facility capable of dispatching massive campaigns with an unmatched ease, simplicity and dependability. The frequent words and phrases in the answers are 'easy to use', 'ability to send bundles of campaigns at once', 'Simplicity', etc. Also important to the respondents firms is the ability to know who has actually received and actually read the campaigns sent. All the answers provided devoid any technical words in terms of features considered to be essential in the email service package of the Emailfactory Oy.

8. What do you like most about the described service? (Question 11)

Fairly, this question did not get as much response as it would be desired. The possible reason for this could be that respondents did not know what exactly to indicate as the most preferred attributes of the service. Also, respondents may be reluctant to give definite answers as they are yet to try the service. The service has only been theoretically described; it is yet to be practically experimented by them. These two factors are thought to be the reasons responsible for the low response. Contrarily, 22 % of respondents stated clearly that the major reason they will employ the email marketing tool is because of the fact that it minimizes resources dissipation.

9. What do you prefer the least in the described service? (Question 12)

Regrettably, the response rate of this question is the least of all, about 15 % response. The fact that the question did not get much expected response does not suggest that the question was wrongly formulated. But it only point to issue that respondents are yet to be clearly identified or informed with kind of service and as such, they are not in the position to definitely state which is the least preferred of the service package.

1.4. The Worth of the Service i.e. Price and Method of Payment

In the section, an appropriate effort was made to attempt to understand the perceptive value of the service which Emailfactory Oy intends to offer the Nigerian and African market, by extension. Of a truth, the Emailfactory Oy is already operational in Europe therefore; it already has its pricing system and strategy in place. But it is not out of pace to also attempt to identify with what value the prospective clients in Nigeria places on the service in terms of price. The answers provided may help form the pricing strategy for the Nigeria market as the present pricing strategy applied in the Europe market may not be applicable in the Nigeria market. Pricing strategy is an important penetration strategy and as such the analysis is carried out in a careful manner. Thus, to accurately derive the precise and appropriate answers from target population, three concise questions were posted.

*10. Based on the description, what price do you expect to pay for the service?
(Question 5)*

In order to get precise answers, respondents were requested to give precise number not a range and they were also instructed to indicate the currency. Also, different categories of services and their corresponding contact capacity were provided in the question. Emailfactory Oy pricing system is such that it is categorical. There are four possible categories, each class attracting different pricing. The groups and corresponding prices and contact capacity are listed below:

- Start 10\$/ per month (500 contacts)
- Silver 30\$/ per month (2,500 contacts)
- Gold 69\$/ per month (10,000 contacts)
- Pro 80\$/ per month (25,000 contacts)

This is done to inform the respondents of the current pricing systems of the company. The Nigeria currency is 'Naira' and the exchange rate to 'USA \$' fluctuates in the region of 150-157 per one 'USA \$' Now, starting from the first category, 'start' attracting 10\$ per month; the equivalent of 10\$ in Naira is 1,577. What that means in essence is that a company that intends to send campaigns to 500 contacts in a month will pay 1,577Naira.

The responses gotten from the businesses questioned corresponds with what has been argued earlier on in the research work (under economic factors) that the Nigerian small and medium-sized business community should be able to use this service. Although about 15 % of the respondents did not give precise price tag on the service, 67 % of respondents did state precisely how much they can pay for the service. Approximately 18 % respondents did not give answers to this question. That therefore, brings the response rate of this question to 82 %. Because this is not a quantitative research type, I will not engage in an overly quantitative analysis of say, the mean and median of people who wants to pay what price for a specific category of service. Instead, a generalization of the would-be customers' perception of Emailfactory Oy services value is provided.

First, since the current pricing applied in Europe was made known to the interviewed businesses, no single respondent indicated a willingness to pay above the price above the stated European prices for all the categories, although, that is logically expected. However, while an infinitesimal percentage of respondents indicate to pay the exact price as it applies in Europe; the majority of respondents who provided a precise price they intend to pay for each of the service category indicated prices somewhat below the European prices. It is important to add that the differences between the set prices and the prices indicated by the respondents are rather not significant. For, instance, for each of the category when calculated, the mean prices they offer to pay are just insignificantly short of the already set prices. (European

market prices) The prices (prices in mean) offer-able as indicated by the respondents are listed below.

- Start 9.2\$/ Month
- Silver 28.6\$/Month
- Gold 67.1\$/Month
- Pro 78.4\$/Month

*11. If additional features are added, would you pay more for the increased value?
(Question 6)*

This question further attempted to gage the level of respondents' perception of the service and what their monetary reaction would be in the event that more features were added to the service. The question did not bother the respondents to indicate monetary quantity they will be willing to further commit should the services values be increased. The electronic marketing industry is not a static one; it is constantly being upwardly reviewed in innovation and invention. Therefore, it is appropriate to establish the position of the potential customers as it concerns their readiness to shift alongside the upward movement of the technology.

The response rate to this question was about 65 %. While the reasons for a significant percentage refusal in providing answers to this question may not be absolutely known, one of the reasons for which it was avoided would be that some respondents have never used email marketing tools. Even some who have used it might want to, first of all, try the Emailfactory Oy service before deciding whether to pay more for an increased value. This I say because approximately 23 % of the answers provided relate to the fact that they would like to use the service first before deciding on any further financial commitment pertaining the increased service value.

However, a relatively substantial number of respondents (46 %) did indicate their readiness to make an increased financial commitment if additional feature that will equally increase their business benefits are added. So, about half the respondents

show a positive sign concerning the possible upward review of the prices, should additional features were added. It therefore, does not connote that the respondents who declined to provide answer to the question will not necessarily pay more for the increased value of the service.

12. If you eventually subscribe to the service, which method of payment would you prefer? (Question 17)

There is an obvious need for this question. The reason being that while most business in the West are used to the online method of payment, the traditional banking payment method still overwhelmingly pervades the entire business environment in Nigeria. Therefore, it is essential that Emailfactory Oy identifies with and understand the method of payment its prospective customers in Nigeria would prefer. Three options were given to the respondents from which they can choose. Also, option to write any other options they wish that was not included in the question was provided. The three options provided are 'online method', 'traditional banking' method and 'via sales representatives'. Answers provided pointed to the fact that businesses interviewed do not really pay much emphasis on methods of payment. The reason for this conclusion is that 72 % of the respondents ticked more than one options. In fact, about 47 % number of respondents ticked all the three options of payment.

13. What impact do you think using this service will have on your business performance? (Question 10)

The central purpose of this research work is to conduct a qualitative research, the result of which can then be used by Emailfactory Oy to make strategic decisions concerning the company's goal of penetrating the African market, Nigeria being the starting point. Therefore, determining the possible impacts the Emailfactory Oy services will have on business performances of the would-be customers is fundamental.

This particular question got a relatively high rate of response, approximately 81 %. The reason might be that respondents have some level of expectations and they

expect that the use of the marketing tool in question should yield economic dividends. Also, the answers provided show that a 59 % of respondents actually trust that email marketing can enhance the actualization of their marketing agenda and organizational goal. Notwithstanding, answers provided concerning the impact each of the respondents expect on their business performance varied, but after a systematic analysis of the questions was carried out, it was then possible to group all the questions into four groups. In other words, there are only four major points that resonate in all of the answers provided. However, the degree to which each of this point resonates in the answers differ, some points were more echoed than others. But suffice to say that each of the four worthy point deserve to be treated as equally important. The four points are, in no particular order, highlighted below:

1. Improved customer service
2. Better marketing/promotion
3. Better utilization of resources- time and money
4. Better management of business contacts and customers

7.5. Effectiveness of E-Marketing over Traditional Tools and Nigeria Maturity Level

In this section a further attempt was made to establish and determine the readiness and/or maturity of the Nigerian market for the email marketing services. And that if it is ready how effective do businesses think the email marketing sector will be, relative to the traditional marketing tools. Although, copious evidences abound in secondary data that allude to the fact that the Nigerian market is mature enough to be penetrated by IT-based marketing services. Accordingly, this fact has been appropriately discussed and analyzed in the literature review section. Despite, the researcher deemed it fit to corroborate the positions obtained from the secondary data with that of the primary data, which is, putting to bear what the prospective business customers feel about the question of market readiness for email marketing. In order to aptly obtain adequate answers to this question of market readiness, two questions were posted in this regard.

14. Do you think email marketing can be more effective than the traditional marketing tools in Nigeria (Question 15)

The purpose of this question is to try to understand the perception of businesses concerning use and growth of email marketing in Nigeria. That is, how do they see email marketing becoming generally adopted over the conventional marketing mix in Nigeria? Factually, only about 50 % of the respondents answered to this question. The reason for the lower-than-expectation responses cannot not be absolutely decipher, but a thorough scrutiny of the entire completed questionnaire revealed that most respondents leave blank question they do not have definite answers for. On the other hand, a meticulous analysis of the answers provided suggest that while email marketing will soon become an accepted marketing practice in the marketing industry in Nigeria, the possibility of it out-performing the traditional marketing tools in Nigeria cannot be clearly seen for now.

15. In your opinion, do you think that the Nigerian market is mature enough for email marketing? (Question 16)

This particular question is at the heart of this research. As already mentioned couple of times earlier, the client company, Emailfactory Oy needs to know whether the market it intends to penetrate is actually mature for penetration. That is, do the customers it planned to serve opine that bringing the said service to their door steps will provide any business good? Response to this question is comparatively high, 84 % respondents attempted the question. An analysis of the data revealed that businesses are of the opinion that the market is well matured for this kind of service. What the data also shows is that although it can be argued that the market is ripe for email marketing, expectations on the part of IT-based marketing service companies should be modest as the concept is yet to be expectedly popularized amongst the business community in Nigeria. One of the responses captures it better when it said that "Nigeria market is still at the infancy stage of email marketing, so service providers should not yet think big in terms of result". A 53 % of responses point to the two positions that have been maintained above.

7.6. Potential Customers' Needs for the Service

16. Please state or describe your need(s) for this service. (Question 14)

This section was asked to support question 10 and 11 of the questionnaire. The question was purposed to fulfill two distinct tasks. One is to check the consistencies of the respondents and the other is to afford respondents the opportunity to state categorically, why they think their businesses need the services of Emailfactory Oy. It is interesting to note that 63 % of the answers provided were similar to the answers provided in questions '10' and '11' respectively. Although answers appear to come in somewhat different phrases, but core message did not differ from that of questions '10' and '11'. According to the data, it can be reported that businesses' needs for this services are to:

1. The need to create and send campaign to loads of customers with ease and simplicity
2. The need to increase publicity and promotion
3. The need to increase company's awareness
4. The need to increase sales and turnover

The above mentioned points represent the overwhelming majority of what the surveyed businesses regards as the major needs they have concerning the services of Emailfactory Oy.

7.7. The Level of Competition

17. What other brands of this service category have you used or are using? (Question 13)

In the section, question regarding the level of competition was asked. 'The core motives behind this question are to first, further validate the already conclusive position that businesses in Nigeria are already employing email marketing tools for their marketing programs; and second, to help determine and know who the competitors are. Indeed, a startling and illuminating result appeared. Again, this question recorded of the highest rate of responses, with a response rate of 93 %. During the analysis of the data, five names of companies which businesses in Nigeria use their email marketing services appear predominantly. The list of the companies which came out of respondents answers are:

1. Hyper mail.com
2. Simply cast.com
3. Icontact.com
4. Elite email.com
5. Stream send.com

8. Discussion

The analysis of the data revealed that not all the respondent companies have used email marketing services before the time of this research, it is therefore clear that the few respondents who showed lack of interest represent, to a large extent, the companies who have never employed the email marketing tools. Overall, it can be conclusively maintained that a sufficient percentage of small and medium sized businesses are interested and enthusiastic about the use of email marketing as an effective modern tool to promote their companies, products and services. Since it is an established fact, as shown in the secondary data analysis, that the internet usage rate in Nigeria is on the record level increase and also, the business community is gradually appreciating the use of email marketing; it can therefore be arguably mentioned that Nigerian market is fully set for e-marketing services penetration. Having said that, it is not evidently clear whether the respondents who claimed to have employed the email marketing tools are frequent users or occasional users.

Concerning the interests of potential customers in the services of the client company, an insightful analysis of answers provided exposed three major possible reasons why the answers were patterned in such a way. The first is that most of the occasional users of email marketing services are yet to fully appreciate the economic imperatives of the tool. In other words, the firms are yet to see the economic gains and business benefits of the adopted tool. Many reasons could be responsible for this and the reasons may be far remote from the actual effective use of the marketing tool. The second reason is that firms that frequently use the tool are either patient with their expectation of reaping the accruable benefits from the email marketing tools or are already reaping the business benefits. The logic that supports this notion is that businesses are set up to make profits and once an investment does not fetch home the expected or a reasonable amount of revenue, smart businesses re-evaluate such investment(s). Therefore, the singular fact that there are significant numbers of repeated or frequent users of this tool is an indication that the tool can yield positive business impact.

Since almost all the businesses use the traditional tools of marketing, there will not be a drastic transition to the e- marketing tools. The transition will be gradual, not because of failure on the part of e-marketing tools to reap in benefits but largely

because of other factors such as the Nigerian socio-economic variables. Now, it is sufficient to know that majority of the businesses are inclined to the traditional methods of marketing but, what is more important to know and understand is that there are appreciable number of firms that are gradually and increasingly adopting the use of email marketing albeit, they still employ the conventional methods. As it is true to any new phenomenon, acceptance of a new technology especially in the developing nations might not be dramatic; however, as businesses continue to prove that it is a business imperative to embrace such technologies, rate of acceptance and usage will definitely be on the rise.

It is part of marketing activities for a company to attempt to decipher what part or feature of a given service is of more importance to a particular customer or a set of target customers and potential customers alike. Consequently, the research attempted to determine which of the service features potential customers consider to be of more importance. However, the results revealed that customers generally do not consider any of the features more important than the other. Interpretatively, what this implies is that whatever the features and attributes Emailfactory Oy considers best for its service to deliver the required result will be in the interest of both parties, the company and customers. In addition, since the use of email marketing is at its nascent state in Nigeria, customers may not be able to necessarily pin point the exact features they think is imperative, but it is pertinent to recognize that prospective business customers expect efficient functionality of the tools and more importantly, reasonable return in investment.

Business ventures are established for economic purposes. In other words, firms are set up to meet and satisfy the needs of customers and in return make or even maximize profits. Therefore, before a company set out to serve a target market, it needs to determine, among other factors, whether the market it intends to serve are financially suited and willing to pay for the services or products of the company. In the light of this, the research attempted to find answer to this question. As pointed out in the results section, the mean figure of prices that potential customers are willing to offer clearly manifest the fact that majority of the interviewed businesses appreciate the value that email marketing will add to their ventures, hence they appear ready to pay almost the value being paid by European customers.

Another yet important implication or readings that can be derived from the data is that although majority of respondents are willing to pay a bit less than the set prices, in the event that Emailfactory Oy decides to penetrate the Nigerian market with the current pricing strategy, most firms may not have difficulties paying for the service. This I say because, the difference between the prices they are offering to pay are, to some extent, minute and inconsequential. What it implied according to the data is that once they subscribe to the service and they are able to establish that the service adopted yields economic benefits, it might not be hard to convince them to make extra financial commitments for an improved service delivery that will aid them serve their own customers better.

International business involves various methods of payment and as such it is crucial to know which method(s) of payments is convenient for both the customers and the company as well. Therefore, this research endeavored to determine the probable methods potential customers are more poised to employ. The most obvious conclusion that can be drawn from the data is that majority of the potential customers are okay with the stated form of payment that is possible in Nigeria. Moreover, a much closer study of the answers provided suggest a further conclusion pertaining to preferable payment method showed that 'online method' and 'traditional banking payment' featured prominently in the answers of the respondents who restricted their answers to only two options. Overall, the conclusion is that most of the respondents consider method of payment less important an issue. But for those who care much about payment options, two methods mainly came to the fore. And they are online payment method and traditional banking method.

Companies that desire to gain and keep customers do not only provide services they provide solutions to problems and answers to questions. Business customers do not just want services for the sake of it any longer; they are asking the questions concerning what particular impact such a particular service can have on their businesses; how can the service help them serve their own customers better? It now behooves on the service provider to deliver services that address the particular needs of its business customers. Therefore, to be able to provide services that meet customers' needs and requirements, the company needs to understand the customers' expectations and needs for the service. In this regard, the researcher tried to question the prospective customers what they believe as possible impact of the

client company's service on their businesses. Four points were raised by the businesses interviewed (See page 56). The four points, as contained in the answers provided, accurately represent the potential customers' expectations of the Emailfactory Oy marketing tools. The prospective customers' expectations concerning the service as highlighted above can be said to characterize the basic requirements they anticipate that email marketing can meet. In other words, these firms will appreciate a kind of email marketing service packages that match or even surpass the aforementioned expectations. Accordingly, Emailfactory Oy will need to be prepared to first, meet these expectations and then strive forward to exceed the expectations in order to profitably position itself in the minds of the potential customers.

In an honest attempt to determine the position email marketing will occupy in the Nigeria business environment in the near future, the question was asked as to the possible effectiveness of e-marketing over traditional marketing tools. A closer look into the data concretely points to the fact that it will take few years before the employment of email marketing tools will become part and parcel of Nigerian marketing culture. Therefore, it can be concluded that the conventional marketing tools in Nigeria will continue to play a larger role than its emailing counterparts for some times to come. Summarily, after proper analysis of the data, the conclusive positions of the businesses interviewed is that first, Nigeria is mature enough for email marketing second; email marketing is just at its budding stage. Now, this result appropriately upholds the exhaustive argument presented in the literature review. And that in effect should be sufficient enough to put to rest any kind of controversy concerning the market maturity level as it concerns email marketing.

One effective way to check the level of business activities of an industry in a given market is to determine whether other service providers similar in nature to one's own company already operate or rather exit in the target market. Also, knowing the other similar companies in the target market, in other words, competitors, is very important. This is because the company will be able to weigh itself against the competitors. The company will need to determine whether it has the operational capacity or financial strength to compete and possibly out-perform the competitors. The research showed that a reasonable numbers of possible competitors already exist. A perusal check on the said competitors' website reveals that Emailfactory Oy has a chance to compete

with these competitors. Although, a thorough examination and study of competitors business activities will still be needed if Emailfactory Oy finally decides to penetrate the Nigerian market.

However, one likely major competitive advantage Emailfactory Oy will have over the aforementioned competitors is its pricing. But to be able to gain competitive edge over the competitors', the client company will have to improve its mass emailing capacity. For instance, Hyper mail.com has over a million mass emailing capacity. That, in essence suggests that currently, *Hyper mail.com* has a huge competitive edge over other competitors when it comes to service capacity. Lastly, the fact that other mass email marketing companies are already doing business in Nigeria is a cursor to the argument that email marketing practice is gradually becoming acceptable as a means of marketing within the business communities in Nigeria.

9. Recommendations and Conclusion

This thesis has successfully attempted to answer the research questions. Remarkably, the outcomes of the empirical part of this research are in symmetry with the issues discussed under the theoretical review. And this can give tangible assurances and answers to the business questions in the mind of Emailfactory Oy.

It is necessary to note that the research method applied in this research was fittingly suitable. Although, there were challenges at the initial stage as to getting contacts of the targeted population for the research. Sending questionnaires to a country where a massive bunch of businesses do not have functioning email addresses was a rather challenging task on its own. But at the end, this huddle of determining the right target group, sending the questionnaire and getting responses back from the targeted population was crossed through hard work and consistency. After all, the research brought in a comparatively high response rate.

Also, the responses to the questions were also somewhat creditable. Factually, respondents' answers to the questionnaire provided information sufficient enough to make veritable conclusions upon. It is certainly not impossible for this research to have been able to provide more valuable information concerning penetrating African market, but the researcher did not desire to go overboard in his work. It is more important to focus on providing crucial answers to the questions raised by the client company.

Certainly, I believe that the result of this research work will be useful in helping the client company make better strategic decisions concerning its goal of introducing its service to Nigeria and Africa, by extension. Moreover, the results contained in this research also serves as a clarion call to the client company that business opportunities in the IT-based marketing services sector beckon as good numbers of companies in this sector have already penetrated the market. Similarly, the results also indicate Nigeria business owners' and marketing managers' interests in having

more of the mass email marketing services in Nigeria. They think more of this kind of business coming into the Nigeria market is a healthy initiative for the business marketing practices.

Furthermore, this thesis also presented possible penetrating strategies that can be applied in penetrating new markets. Worthy secondary data were analyzed in the genuine attempt to give detailed and valuable information concerning new markets entry.

However, one of the pressing issue revealed by the result of this research and which the client company needs to swiftly attend to is the fact that companies offering similar services as Emailfactory Oy are already doing businesses in Nigeria. In business terms, that means there is already some sort of competition on ground. In other words, the market is no longer entirely new to the idea of emailing tools as a means of marketing. The major competitors as revealed in this research can be studied closely. Emailfactory Oy needs to research into the dealings, pricing mechanisms and modes of service of the competitors so as to decipher the company's strength as against the competitors' weaknesses and vice versa. Identifying the business competitive advantages or competitive edge will help position the company in such a way that customers and prospective customers can see the company's service as being superior when compared to other companies providing similar services.

Without unnecessarily repeating what has earlier been mentioned, penetrating a new market with a relatively new service would require a whole lot of promotional activities. All-of-the-above promotional strategies would need to be summoned in order to check and define which of the strategies is indeed fit to use in achieving the business goal. The promotional tools to be employed must be the ones that are capable of achieving at least two basic things: Create awareness of the company that has just made an entry into the market and convince potential customers of the need to patronize the company's services over the competitors'.

Finally, entering a new market does not entirely suggest that a company needs to be physically present in the said market. There are ranges of market entry options from

which a firm can choose, depending on the firm's business goals and operational capacity. A company would have to analyze and weigh its firm's strengths and weaknesses against the intended target market's opportunities and threats. Few of the probable questions that must be asked are: Does the firm has the capacity to serve the intended market, are the opportunities enormous enough that it outweighs the threats, is it cost effective to be physically present in the market or can the company perform better by applying all other entry options other than being physically present? Once these questions are carefully and honestly answered, decisions can therefore be made concerning the firm's expansion and growth objectives.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample of Cover Letter

9/22/2011
Oluwaseun A Adeola

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Mr. Adelana Femi

2, Kosoko Street Yaba, Lagos

Nigeria

Dear Mr. Femi,

I am Adeola Paul, a final year student of international business at Savonia University of Applied Sciences, Finland. I am currently working on my final thesis the topic of which is: Penetrating the growing IT based marketing services in African markets. Precisely, I am doing

my research work for a small company which has presence in Finland and France, the head office is however located in Finland. The company possesses a strong interest in extending its services into the increasingly growing African markets.

The target group for my research work is small and medium-sized companies like you and I intend to only use the data collected from you in determining penetrating strategies for my client company and also to employ the data to verify information we already have for the sole purpose of making informed decisions. Therefore, I wish to solidly assure you that your privacy will be given utmost priority.

Kindly complete the enclosed questionnaire and return the completed paper to me via the email address provided above.

Therefore, I will sincerely appreciate if you can afford me a tiny bit of your valuable time by helping to provide answers to the questions in the questionnaire paper enclosed.

Yours Sincerely,
Oluwaseun P. Adeola

Appendix 2: Questionnaire: Form 101

NEW SERVICE CONCEPT ENTRY

EMAIL FACTORY OY Email factory oy is a B2B marketing Service Company with focus on email advertising niche. The major concern of the company is to constantly work to create intuitive and efficient newsletter tools for its customers. Traditionally, marketers and entrepreneurs alike have usually employed the use of MS style editors or ready templates, among other tools in sending newsletters and campaigns to customers. And these methods have been proved to be time consuming, resource wasting and energy dissipating. This is because people spend needless time editing, re-editing text to fit templates, trimming margins, resizing images etc. before they can send their newsletters. Now, here is where email factory Oy comes in. the company creates tools whereby it is conveniently possible to create and send emails and campaigns to over 100,000 customers in less than two minutes. For the sake of emphasis, the tool email factory Oy created is way faster than MS editor and much more flexible than ready templates. All customers need to do is to create the message(s) and image(s) and sign in to the webpage, drag the images and paste the texts. The tools will edit and resize the image appropriately by itself. Also, it is possible to resize the shapes of the images to a particular size of interest. The features are fascinatingly simple to use. It allows you to create your message and designs. You can also manage your contacts, maintain customers'

database and send messages to over 100,000 customers at once. Furthermore, you have the privilege of checking the statistics of the campaigns you have sent. I.e. you can decipher how many people have actually read your campaigns/ messages. Another feature is the editor. This feature helps you to design your campaign according to your taste or fashion.

In precise terms, the features are listed below:

1. Email campaign analyses-Track email performance and measure results.
2. Automated Tools- Save time & Energy with built-in tools.
3. Complete List and contacts Management- Manage email contacts.
4. Template Designer- Create easy Email Ad & Design.
5. Help and support- Get Support & Help when needed.

In conclusion, I wish to state that the objective of the company is to ensure customers get the best out of their email marketing. And this they intend to achieve by making sure that the platform or interface created will continue to be improved upon.

*** Required**

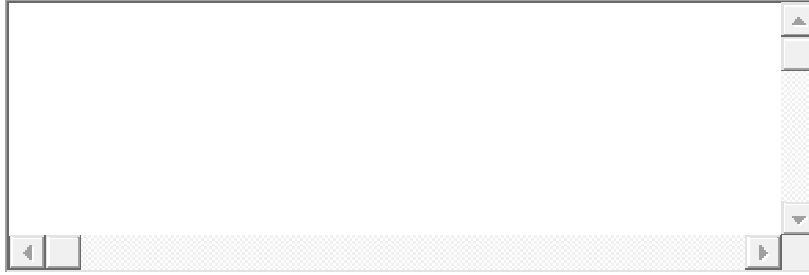
1. Please give the name of your company *

2. What position do you occupy in this company *Your portfolio

3. What features/attributes do you consider imperative for the company to offer with its ser-

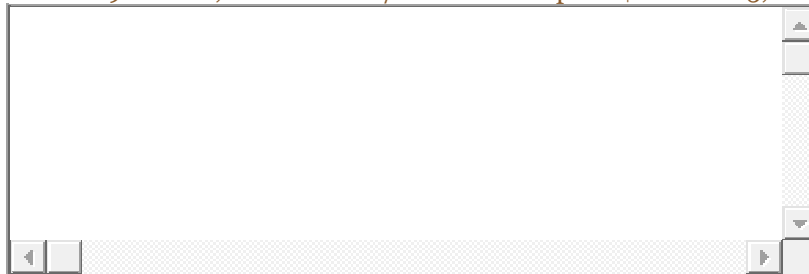
vices?

4. How interested would you be in using the described service?



6. Based on the description, what price would you pay for the service in each of the these categories?

Please provide precise number, not a range. Also indicate currency. The price attached to each category is the price currently paid by customers in Europe. The categories are four: 'Start'=\$10 for 500 contacts/month, 'Silver'=\$30 for 2,500 contacts/month, 'Gold'=69 for 10,000 contacts/month and 'pro'=\$80 for 25,000 contacts/month



6. If [ADDITIONAL FEATURES] are to be added to the basic concept, would you pay more for increased value?

7. Have you ever use emailing tools as a medium for marketing your products or services?

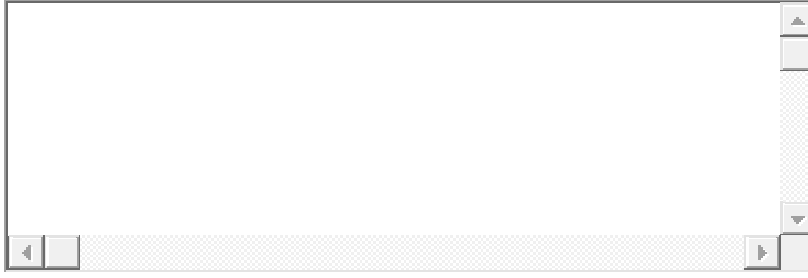
- Yes
- No

8. How often do you use services from this service category.

Question applicable only if you answered yes to question "7"

- Frequently
- Occassionally
- Rarely
- Other:

9. What other types of marketing tools do you employ

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10. What impact do you think using this service will have on your business performance?

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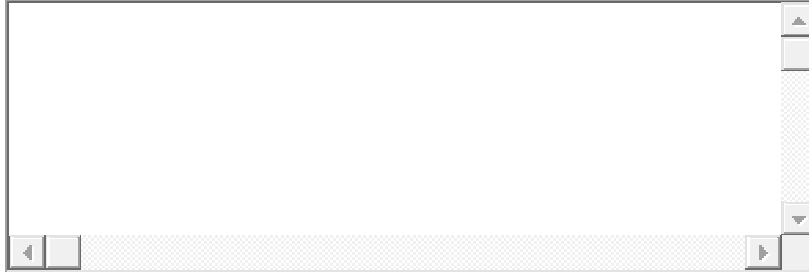
11. What do you like most about the described service?

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12. What do you like the least in the described service?

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13. What other brands of this service category have you used or are using?

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14. Please, state or describe your need(s) for this service

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15. Do you think e-mail marketing can be more effective than the traditional marketing tools

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in Nigeria?

16. In your opinion, do you think that Nigeria market is mature enough for e-mail marketing?

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17. If you were to subscribe for this service, which method of payment would you prefer?

You can choose more than one option.

- Online method

- Traditional banking method
- Via sales representatives
- Other: