

SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR. (MRS) SHOLA SAFO-DUODU, NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF MARKETING, GHANA AT THE 8th CONFERENCE OF PUBLIC SERVICE CHIEF DIRECTORS, CHIEF EXECUTIVES AND CHAIRPERSONS OF THE GOVERNING BOARDS/COUNCILS AT CAPITAL VIEW HOTEL- KOFORIDUA FROM 23RD TO 26TH OF APRIL, 2015

The Chairman
Other Distinguished Speakers
Participants and other Stakeholders

I bring you warm greetings from the Governing Council and the entire membership of the Chartered Institute of Marketing, Ghana.

Prof. Chairman

Please allow me to express my sincerest gratitude and that of the Institute to the leadership of the Public Services Commission for the confidence they have in the CIMG and for which reason we have been invited to deliver this paper on this auspicious occasion when some of our best brains in the public service are gathered here to exchange ideas and work for the progress of the institutions you represent and mother Ghana.

We are happy to note that this year's conference seeks to address matters on emerging issues; and I believe strongly that it is a move in the right direction.

Coming from a professional body, our passion has been directed at how together with corporate Ghana we can support national development while being relevant internationally as well.

As you indicated in your invitation letter to us, it is time that we re-examine the way we do things and reorganize or reposition ourselves so that we can properly and efficiently deal with the challenges that confront our institutions.

May I add that in the present age of communication and the world becoming a global village, we cannot afford to lag behind, but must seek every means to align with world class standards in order to succeed.

As you rightly observed in your letter, professionalism holds the key to a large extent in making our institutions work effectively to achieve the needed results.

Prof. Chairman
Ladies and Gentlemen

As part of our contribution to these deliberations by public service technocrats and experienced administrators, the CIMG chose the topic "Professionalism of the Public Sector: Brand Orientation as a Game Changer.

Because of my background as a lecturer and trainer, I would like to set the parameters of the discourse as follows:

1. Identify the subject terms
2. Identify the key words
3. Introduce the abstract
4. The status quo as regards public service marketing
5. The debate (The role and value of marketing practice in public service management and its attendant case studies)
6. ...The New Dispensation

Identify the subject terms

1. Marketing strategy
2. Government marketing
3. Marketing research
4. Marketing management
5. Government publicity
6. Political communications

Identify key words

1. Market-orientation
2. Brand orientation
3. Public sector Reforms/ New public management
4. Public sector branding
5. Corporate branding
6. Public services
7. Professionalism
8. Civil services
9. Non-profit marketing

THE ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to examine brand orientation as an alternative to market orientation in our public services management system. It is the view of marketing scholars around the world that, market-orientation is myopic rather than broad in perspective. The issue with market-orientation is that, it is over reliant on customers, lacks true interactions, it is mechanistic and its emphasis on economic value is overly strong whereas brand orientation focuses on the opposite (*Reference: Gromark, Johan and Melen, Frans; Journal of marketing management, Jul 2013, Vol. 29 issues 9/10, P1019-123*).

We would like to note that the public services in Ghana have not employed market-orientation nor brand-orientation strategies in their approach as yet but this does not stop our public services from leap frogging from the market-orientation stage to the brand-orientation level.

When this is done, then we can say emphatically that professionalism indeed has been inculcated and instilled in our public service management system. It is then that we can conclude that we are no longer in the public sector reform stage but in the New Public Management (NPM) era. Academically it can be argued that, brand-orientation is the sine qua non for the professionalization of the public service.

The reason that we can make such a statement is that academic papers that have been reviewed point to the fact that, it is market and brand-orientation that have been lacking in all our efforts at professionalizing the public service. Indeed this has been fed by the belief that marketing can only thrive in a competitive environment, deregulation era, declining product lifecycles and the information super high way.

However, in spite of the fact that, the central government and the public service do not necessarily operate in competitive environments, there is still the need to embed strategic marketing principles to move the public service into the new public management era. After all is said and done, don't we have the ministries, departments and agencies competing for funds from the government purse? If this phenomenon is not competition, then what is it?

THE STATUS QUO AS REGARDS PUBLIC SERVICE MARKETING

During my preparation on the subject matter, I realised that the existing literature on government/public service marketing is mostly in the area of customer service and public relations and even with that, the practice is not fully embedded; as the findings below show:

- ✚ There is lack of in-depth market-oriented and customer focused programmes in the public services sector
- ✚ Official decisions and actions are not marketing focused because of the seemingly non-competitive nature of the MDA
- ✚ There is very little or no usage of market insights and strategic marketing planning processes
- ✚ There is very little usage of marketing campaigns or integrated marketing communications programmes to ensure attitudinal and behavioural changes
- ✚ Difficulty of embracing marketing principles within governmental sector because of the large number of stakeholders who need to agree on any marketing initiative or who are part of the decision making process
- ✚ Difficulty of packaging government policies and ideas into brands that has unique selling propositions so as to appeal to the citizenry
- ✚ Difficulty of managing marketing channels as vehicles for propagating government policies and ideas
- ✚ Lack of marketing/sales departments within the public service structure

THE DEBATE (THE ROLE AND VALUE OF MARKETING PRACTICE IN PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT AND ITS ATTENDANT CASE STUDIES) - Slide (6)

In order to imbibe the concepts of **brand-orientation and market-orientation** principles, there is the need to appreciate marketing as a profession and its role and value in public service marketing. To do that, let's run quickly through the following:

1. What really is marketing? and this is shown in slide (7)
2. Is it about advertising? and this is shown in slide (8)
3. Is it about product(s)? and this is shown in slide (9)
4. Is it about special offers? and this is shown in slide (10)
5. Is it about logos and brands? and this is shown in slide (11)
6. Is it about point of sales? and this is shown in slide (12)

Indeed, marketing is about all the things mentioned above and much more as shown on slide (13). The CIM defines marketing as "the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably" in slide (14). For example, marketing in a commercial sense as shown in slide (15) demonstrates finding a need, meeting the need, and doing it profitably. In other words, getting the right stuff as shown in slide (16)

The critical thing about marketing is its ability to change attitudes and behaviors as shown in slide (17), and in Ghana we can see this being done by the Made in Ghana and sanitation campaigns going on presently. In the previous government, the late Aliu Mahama campaigns on indiscriminate littering, is also a case in point. and I am sure you all recall easily the campaign showing a madman lashing a citizen for publicly urinating at an unauthorized place.

In all of these campaigns the following were strongly demonstrated as shown in slide (18). That there was:

1. The need for marketing research to be undertaken before we embark on any new product(s) development or new public services' programmes or projects;
2. Then followed by the need to develop these product(s) and programmes/projects based on deep, robust and tight consumer/citizenry insights;
3. The need to consider the Pricing/costing of such product(s), services and programmes/projects
4. Lastly, there was the need for Tracking and measuring or monitoring and evaluation.

All of these in a cyclical manner.

Marketing in action

Just like the farmer uses the hoe, cutlass, and the combined harvester as its tools of engagement, the marketer's tools are the four (4P's) in case of a product concern in slide (19) and for services the seven (7P's) as shown in slide (20).

We would like to cite the example of a case study in Luton in the UK where citizen disposal of chewing gum became an unsightly and irritating problem for the Luton Borough Council. Apparently the UK Authority spent an estimated 150 million pounds a year cleaning up dropped badly disposed gums. How was this problem solved through marketing? The Luton Borough Council encouraged gum users to dispose of their gums in a fun and engaging way via voting with their gums on controversial topics, celebrity faces they loved to hate. I daresay that this same approach could be used by our districts and metropolitan assemblies here in Ghana to solve our sanitation issues. The case study example can be found in slide (21).

Other case studies in the UK demonstrate how the government used behavioural change marketing to save the NHS and the government billions of pounds per annum with a campaign named change4Life in slide (22& 23); the THINK! Campaign tackling drink-driving as shown in slide (24); the its does not have to happen campaign for knife crime reduction (also as shown in slide 24). All of these campaigns in the long run saved the NHS and the government billions of pounds sterling which were then directed at other areas for economic growth.

BRAND-ORIENTATION VRS MARKET-ORIENTATION

At a glance the differences are captured in slide (25)

Prof. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given the above scenario, I am led to believe that the Ghanaian public service is endowed with a good number of these professionals capable of employing their professional expertise in their various areas to deliver excellent performance.

Consequently, what will be my focus at this stage is to delve deeper into my topic and to recommend that what is important at this period for our public service is the issue of utilising the relevant professional expertise that abounds and to make sure that the right approach and principles are adopted and embedded as part of professionalising the public services sector.

My topic suggests that Brand-orientation will immensely move the needle for us or help as the game changer within the current socio-economic and political environment.

What is Brand Orientation?

Mats Urde, a brand expert defined brand-orientation as - "An approach in which the processes of the organisation revolve around the creation, development and protection of brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target customers (audience) with the aim of achieving lasting competitive advantages in the form of brands".

The reason why we have chosen to focus on brand-orientation is that in recent years:

- There has been an increasing interest in brands – not only in the private sector, but in the non-profit and public sectors as well.
- Brands have become the focal point not only for products, but for companies, organisations, people, cities, regions, nations, religions and political parties as well. This can be seen as the ultimate triumph of marketing practice in the public service.

Understanding the role of brands and brand orientation in the public service

Since brand-orientation in the public service is still in its infancy as a research area, there is the need to develop a conceptual framework for brand-orientation that reflects the breadth and diversity that characterizes the public sector. This is a prerequisite for truly understanding the role of brands and brand-orientation in the public service.

Research shows that values are often common to a generation. People who grow up under similar conditions often share the same experiences and therefore similar values. These values often remain the same over one's

lifetime, but might be expressed differently depending on a person's age. In other words, the values held by today's youth will probably stay with them for their entire lives and will be hard to change. *With this in mind, it is easy to say that, in order to successfully build strong brands in the public sector, understanding the values of the various stakeholders and communicating them in a way that suits the times must come first.*

As a result of growing individualism, it is very probable that citizens will increasingly evaluate a public sector's operations based on how their products, brands, services and programmes benefit them personally, rather than based on a collective-benefits perspective. This relationship affects their view of the public sector's purpose and benefits.

Benefits of strong brands in the public service

An organisation that embraces brand-orientation and develops a cohesive brand strategy creates a solid platform for becoming more visible, distinct and relevant as shown in slide (26). This is fundamental to increasing awareness and acceptance of the operations in question. A high level of awareness and acceptance has proven invaluable for many organisations. Companies in the private sector realized that this value could be clearly discernible in improving financial performance. They also realized that the value of being well known and liked gave them a stronger position to negotiate from, and led to greater legitimacy and credibility in their contact with investors, politicians and other important stakeholders.

In society-keeper institutions – primarily government agencies with a monopoly – the need for powerful internal development is the main reason for prioritizing brand building. However, those who work in this kind of government agency might find it very hard to understand the value of initiating a brand-building process aimed at increasing awareness and acceptance of their operations. Is this truly meaningful when there is no real alternative to the agency and therefore no other organization to be positioned against? This is a common question among employees who feel that investing in strengthening the government agency's brand is just a passing fad and therefore a waste of time.

The answer is that there are very good reasons for prioritizing and unwaveringly working with brands in this kind of organization as well, because it reinforces the capacity for development in the agency. Powerful internal development is built on access to competent and highly motivated employees who are deeply engaged. This is crucial, since so many public-sector organisations are extremely specialised, which means that they have a particular responsibility for driving professional development within their own area of expertise. Developing benefits for society therefore goes hand in hand with developing organisational competence. In light of this, it is essential that a government agency be well known, liked and considered trustworthy and competent. If not, the agency runs the risk of having difficulty recruiting the necessary competencies and skills.

Most government agencies already work intuitively to increase awareness and acceptance of their organisation's operations, conscious of the fact that their existence may ride on their legitimacy.

Why then are not all government agencies successful in creating acceptance for their operations? The answer to this question is found in the factors that are fundamental to acceptance. Somewhat simplified, there are two factors that contribute to creating acceptance for an organisation: attraction and trust.

Attraction is generated when a brand is considered interesting and relevant for an individual or society in general. Therefore, to be accepted, an organization must be visible and powerful, and be perceived as special in some way.

Trust is the reliance on the integrity, strength or ability of someone or an organisation
You earn a person's trust by consistently proving yourself to them. There is no way to assure a person that you are trustworthy outside of your actions.

Trust lies at the heart of a strong relationship. That explains why people feel betrayed, angry and taken for granted when the trust is lost. It behooves on organisations to build and maintain the trust for a guaranteed and continuous acceptance.

For non-competitive service providers, greater effectiveness is the most important reason for developing a strong brand. Those organisations that provide a service that has not been exposed to competition often struggle with problems associated with low awareness and a blurred image not only on the minds of the target audience but in the minds of the providers of that service itself. Naturally, this is unfortunate since activities and communication meant to establish and develop relations may not have any effect.

For a government agency, which is sometimes guided by directives that are vague or far too extensive, it is crucial to formulate a concrete mission and an inspiring vision that can be used as a platform for the brand-building process.

The quality of the brand-building process is usually intimately associated with the clarity of the mission and vision of an organisation. However, in order to successfully develop a distinct mission and vision, an organisation must have clearly defined directives. Blurred directives are probably an underlying reason for a common criticism of the public sector – that it is far too introverted and places too much focus on organisational matters. Nonetheless, in most cases, it is relatively easy, based on the organisation's directives, to develop a strong mission and vision, because the public sector usually operates in areas that are absolutely vital to both individuals and society.

THE NEW DISPENSATION

The new dispensation is showcased in slides (27 & 28), with the former showing the proposed evolutions and the latter showcasing the stages in the Brand building processes.

Prof. Chairman
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, I wish to say that an important contribution of this paper is that I have compared market and brand orientation with a focus on the public sector, and shown that brand orientation is an independent management orientation that addresses the shortcomings of market orientation in the public sector.

Another contribution is that I have shown that there are several benefits that come with brand orientation, no matter the degree of competition, which is not the case with market-orientation. In relation to this, we have also identified and characterized different types of benefits that are crucial for specific types of organisations in the public sector. Yet another contribution is that, by studying the public sector, we have clarified some general differences between market-orientation and brand-orientation that can otherwise be difficult to perceive).

Going forward, I daresay that we must generate the desire to win by leap-frogging the market-orientation stage to the brand-orientation level to ensure we achieve the new public services era.

Long live the public service!

Long live the marketing profession!

Long live mother Ghana.

APPENDIX

A/ SUBJECT TERMS

Marketing strategy

It is the goal of increasing sales and achieving a sustainable competitive advantage. Marketing strategy includes all basic and long-term activities in the field of marketing that deal with the analysis the strategic initial situation of a company/organisation and the formulation, evaluation and selection of market-oriented strategies and therefore contribute to the goals of the company/organisation and its marketing objective

Marketing strategy is sorting out who your audience actually is, and then finding out what has meaning for them. What do they care about, and how does this relate to your offer? What message can you deliver that is both true and meets your consumer/target audience squarely at the level of their needs? Marketing strategy is the process of uncovering messages that can be heard. Marketing strategy allows you to answer the crucial question your offer must address: "Why should I care?" To paraphrase Peter Drucker: Consumers do not buy what you sell. They buy what has value to them.

Marketing research

It is "the process or set of processes that links the consumers, customers, and end users to the marketer through information — information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process. Marketing research specifies the information required to address these issues, designs the method for collecting information, manages and implements the data collection process, analyzes the results, and communicates the findings and their implications

Marketing Management

The application, tracking and review of a company's marketing resources and activities.

The scope of a business' marketing management depends on the size of the business and the industry in which the business operates. Effective marketing management will use a company's

resources to increase its customer base, improve customer opinions of the company's products and services, and increase the company's perceived value.

Political Communications

It is a sub-field of political science and communication that deals with the production, dissemination, procession and effects of information, both through media and interpersonally, within a political context. This includes the study of the media, the analysis of speeches by politicians and those that are trying to influence the political process, and formal and informal conversations among members of the public among other aspects.

B/ KEY WORDS

Marketing Orientation

A marketing orientated approach means how a business reacts to what customers want. The decisions taken are based around information about customers' needs and wants, rather than what the business thinks is right for the customer. Most successful businesses take a market-orientated approach.

Brand Orientation

An approach in which the processes of the organisation revolve around the creation, development and protection of brand identity in an ongoing interaction with target customers with the aim of achieving lasting competitive advantages in the form of brands.

Public Sector Reform

Public sector reform consists of deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations with the objective of getting them to run better. Structural change may include merging or splitting public sector organizations while process change may include redesigning systems, setting

New public management (NPM)

A government term formally conceptualized by Hood (1991), denotes broadly the government policies, since the 1980s, that aimed to modernize and render the public sector more efficient. The basic hypothesis holds that market oriented management of the public sector will lead to greater cost-efficiency for governments, without having negative side-effects on other objectives and considerations. Ferlie et al (1996) describe 'New Public Management in Action' as involving the introduction into public services of the 'three Ms': Markets, managers and measurement.

Public Sector Branding

Branding in the public sector means different things to different people. For some, it's simply a logo; for others it's an underpinning philosophy. Public sector brands are some of the most powerful and engaging in existence. Often however it seems few people outside of marketing and communications departments understand the true role of their brand. Few realise that effective public sector brands are about engaging with people, understanding their beliefs and behaviours and delivering a business model they can buy into, it's not just about logos and banners. Although, of course, the visual expression is an important communication tool to capture interest and loyalty

Corporate Branding

Corporate branding refers to the practice of promoting the brand name of a corporate entity, as opposed to specific products or services. The activities and thinking that go into corporate branding are different from product and service branding because the scope of a corporate brand is typically much broader. It should also be noted that while corporate branding is a distinct activity from product or service branding, these different forms of branding can, and often do, take place side-by-side within a given corporation. The ways in which corporate brands and other brands interact is known as the corporate brand architecture.

Corporate branding affects multiple stakeholders (e.g., employees, investors) and impacts many aspects of companies such as the evaluation of their product and services, corporate identity and culture, sponsorship, employment applications, brand extensions

Public Service

Service provided or supported by a government or its agencies or agency involved in providing public service for or on behalf of a government.

A public service is a service which is provided by government to people living within its jurisdiction, either directly (through the public sector) or by financing provision of services. The term is associated with a social consensus (usually expressed through democratic elections) that certain services should be available to all, regardless of income. Even where public services are neither publicly provided nor publicly financed, for social and political reasons they are usually subject to regulation going beyond that applying to most economic sectors.

Professionalism

Professionalism' describes the qualities, skills, competence and behaviours expected of individuals belonging to any given profession. A Marketing professional will help determine the marketing needs of a firm; assist in developing, implementing, and maintaining marketing plans; and help develop promotional, pricing, product development, advertising, and public relations strategies to balance the needs of the firm and ensure customer satisfaction.