



ELECTRONIC MARKETING TECHNIQUES AND BUSINESS SUCCESS OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT: *This study examined electronic marketing techniques and business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms in south-south, Nigeria. This study adopted the correlational research design; the population of this study consisted of 28 registered food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South, Nigeria. One hundred and ninety-six (196) managers and senior marketing personnel of the registered food and beverage manufacturing firms on the basis of 7 managers and senior marketing personnel per headquarter branch constituted the study subjects. The responses received from the data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Based on the results of the analysis carried out, it was confirmed that electronic marketing has a positive and significant relationship with business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone of Nigeria. Based on these findings, it was concluded that electronic marketing has a positive and significant relationship with business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone of Nigeria. The study recommends amongst others that food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria, particularly those that are currently experiencing low business success, should adopt electronic marketing such as content marketing, e-mail marketing and social media marketing as it would increase their level of business success.*

KEYWORDS: Electronic Marketing Techniques, Business Success, Food and Beverage Manufacturing Firms.



INTRODUCTION

Firms are faced with different kinds of challenges resulting from poor sales growth, poor market share growth and how to achieve business success. The success of the firm is cardinal to the sustenance and survival of the firm. Food and beverage firms over the years have faced a lot of challenges. Some of the key challenges, which include rising operational costs, including energy expenses, transportation costs, and raw material prices, can strain the profitability of food and beverage firms. Extant literature has suggested that electronic marketing can improve the performance of food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria (Sarki et al., 2021).

E-marketing means advertising of goods or brands via various forms of electronic devices. Digital marketing is frequently referred to as 'online marketing,' 'internet marketing' or 'web marketing.' E-marketing is also referred to as online marketing or digital marketing. The word digital marketing has developed and has become famous over time, mainly in certain nations. In some nations like the USA, online marketing is quite dominant; in Italy, it is mentioned as web marketing; in the UK and worldwide, digital marketing has become the most common term. Digital marketing is a subgroup of marketing which uses digital technology to place and trade goods. Digital media is so worldwide that customers have access to information anytime and anywhere they need it. A great transaction of consideration must be focused on the great opportunities digital marketing offers, with little attention on the actual challenges enterprises are facing going digital (Kotler, 2010).

Electronic marketing is the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic media, including the internet (Kotler, 2010). The emergence of technological based electronic marketing influences traditional marketing approaches and requires rethinking for the development of strategic initiatives to remain competitive in a digital era. At its initial stage, content marketing, social media marketing and search engine marketing became the key for successful online marketing campaigns and a tool for electronic marketing (Mohammed & Ahmad, 2020).

The emergence of technological based approaches to traditional marketing boosted by digital elements is known as electronic marketing. Electronic marketing has dynamics and characteristics that need to be understood for the development and implementation of effective marketing strategic initiatives (Mohammed & Ahmad, 2020). Research scholars have given attention to the digital aspect of marketing through the utilization of technological advancements, including the monitoring and analysis of customer feedback, the response towards customer feedback, the digital implementation plan, the establishing of digital management reputations, the analysis of social media's impact and the integration of third-party review sites that drive positively towards better business performance (De Pelsmacker et al., 2018).

Ling and Peng (2008) explained that business performance is the result of organization operational activity, including the achievement of an organization's goal either internally or externally achieved. The desire of firms to improve their performance in the business environment is the idea behind all marketing actions and programmes, because the business performance of the firm is important for the strategic well-being of business intentions and also determines the continued existence of the firm in the business palace. The traditional marketing techniques have failed to improve business performance; obviously, every mobile



firm in the telecommunication industry wants to increase their business performance in terms of sales growth and repeat purchase. Hanmaikyur (2016) submitted that sales growth refers to the amount a company derives from sales compared to a previous corresponding period of time in which the latter sales exceed the former. It is usually given as a percentage. In the same vein, Sharp and Sharp (2008) defined repeat purchase as a purchase made by a consumer that replaces a previous purchase that has been consumed.

Extant literature revealed that electronic marketing has become the focal point for the increase of business performance. Kotni (2016) stated that increasing business performance requires firms to review their marketing initiatives and improve on it. This implies that food and beverage firms need to review their marketing practices by switching from traditional marketing practices to a modernized way of marketing, otherwise known as electronic marketing. Electronic marketing is a modernized form of marketing whereby companies use digital technology to advertise their products and services and interact with customers. It involves providing marketing services through cell phones, e-mail, social media, websites, or any other digital mediums in order to promote a brand (Khan & Islam, 2017). It is on this premise that this study examined the relationship between electronic marketing techniques and business performance of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The food and beverage industry in Nigeria is one of the most competitive industries in the country given the large number of firms operating in the industry. The number of food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria has grown tremendously and they are scattered across the six geopolitical zones of the country. The South-South geopolitical zone is characterized by a massive increase in the number of food and beverage manufacturing firms. These firms are of various sizes all of which are in the race to increase their level of customer patronage and dominate the market.

However, the level of poor customer patronage has become so challenging to some of these firms. Many food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone are finding it difficult to increase their level of customer patronage in order to attain business success. There have been a series of complaints from manufacturers of food and beverage products over poor customer patronage, leading to poor business performance and this has become so worrisome especially during this period of economic downturn caused by the removal of fuel subsidy. The poor customer patronage of food and beverage products has led to a huge financial loss for these firms resulting from low sales, loss of market share, and loss of loyal customers. In order to ensure business survival, some food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone have decided to review their marketing strategies and tactics in order to increase their level of business success.

These firms have decided to switch from traditional marketing practices to digital form of marketing as a way of increasing customer patronage. However, ever since these firms implement the concept of electronic marketing, it is still unclear whether their efforts have yielded the desired result of increasing business success as empirical studies that examined the relationship between electronic marketing and business success of food and beverage firms in the South-South zone of Nigeria are scanty to the best of my knowledge. Therefore, this study is intended to empirically examine the relationship between electronic marketing



and business success of fast food beverage firms in South-South, Nigeria and to fill the created a gap in literature.

Aims and Objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to examine the extent of relationship between electronic marketing techniques and business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. Determine the relationship between content marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.
- ii. Investigate the relationship between content marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.
- iii. Determine the relationship between social media marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.
- iv. Examine the relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

Research Questions

In order to adequately address the objectives of the study, the following research questions were raised:

- i. How does content marketing relate with sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria?
- ii. How does content marketing relate with market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria?
- iii. To what extent does social media marketing relate with sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria?
- iv. To what extent does social media marketing relate with market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between content marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between content marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.



REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on Diffusion of Innovations Theory.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DIT) explains the process by which innovations are adopted by users. According to Rogers (1995), diffusion is the process by which new ideas are communicated to members of a social system over a period of time through different channels.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Rogers, 1995) assumes that the consumers move through five stages before arriving at the decision to purchase or to reject a new idea or product. These stages include: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption (rejection) of the new idea (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2007; Armstrong & Kotler, 2003). Awareness stage demonstrates the time the consumer gets to know of the innovation but lacks sufficient information about it. Awareness often takes place through exposure to the innovation through various channels of communication. Upon trying out the innovation on limited basis and evaluating its performance against expectations, the consumer makes a lasting decision of either adopting or rejecting the innovation altogether.

The diffusion of innovations theory denotes the intention of individuals or businesses to adopt a technology as a modality to perform a traditional activity. The motivating factor that drives the intention of individuals or business entities to adopt modern technology to perform traditional activities is the relative advantage which is expected to be gain. The DIT is applicable to the study considering the relative novelty of e-marketing (Ellis-Chadwick & Doherty, 2012) as a marketing strategy. The theory guides organizations in understanding how adoption of d-marketing initiatives alongside new systems, innovations and ideas is guided by characteristics depicted by the theory. Moreover, not all employees are likely to adopt the innovations, systems and e-marketing at the same time but at different stages based on their evaluation of the innovations.

Conceptual Review

Here, efforts are made to review various concepts used in the study.

Concept of Electronic marketing

Electronic marketing is the application of marketing principles and techniques via electronic means. Harridge-March (2004) posited that electronic marketing makes use of the internet as the vehicle to address the 4Ps of marketing, namely product, price, promotion and place. Electronic marketing therefore encompasses all the activities a business conducts via the worldwide web with the aim of attracting new businesses, retaining current ones and developing corporate brand identity. It is a modern business practice involved in marketing of goods, services, information and ideas via the internet and other electronic means (El-Gohary, 2011).

Electronic marketing is "the strategic use of digital technologies and online platforms to communicate, engage, and build relationships with customers, prospects, and stakeholders" (Chaffey & Smith, 2019). This definition emphasizes the strategic aspect of electronic



marketing, highlighting the purposeful use of digital technologies and online platforms. It recognizes that electronic marketing goes beyond mere advertising and aims to communicate, engage, and build relationships with the target audience. According to Dave Chaffey (2021), electronic marketing is "the process of planning and executing marketing activities that leverage digital channels to reach, engage, and convert customers and prospects." This definition highlights the process-oriented nature of electronic marketing, involving the planning and execution of marketing activities. It emphasizes the use of digital channels to reach, engage, and convert customers and prospects, emphasizing the importance of driving desired actions and outcomes.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is the process of creating and sharing valuable free content to attract and convert prospects into customers, and customers into repeat buyers (Duc, 2013). Content marketing is the creation of content that is relevant, compelling, entertaining and valuable and this content must be consistently provided to maintain or change the behaviour of customers. Content Marketing Institute (2013) described content marketing as a strategic marketing approach which focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience, and ultimately, to drive profitable customers.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) is an electronic marketing technique that takes advantage of social technological platforms for the use of marketing activities (Baines & Fill, 2014). Social media is changing the way consumers take part in offerings; nowadays anyone can comment, share and create information on brands or people. Enterprises can no longer control how they are perceived on the marketplace. Evans and Mckee (2010) put it in words as, "The social web exposes the good, the bad and the ugly," meaning that all things regarding a specific brand can be shared, whether positive or negative. Social media has had an impact on how enterprises work with marketing; many believe that traditional marketing methods might fade in the near future (ibid). Another definition of social media marketing is "online resources that people use to share content: video, photos, images, text, ideas, insight, humor, opinion, gossip and news" (Alharbie, 2015). A large distinction compared to traditional marketing is that advertisers no longer have to pay large amounts of money to be seen or heard somewhere; they now have the possibility to create their own content to connect with consumers globally (Zarella, 2010).

Concept of Business Success

The successfulness of every business organization is determined by its effectiveness in the achievement of set goals and objectives over a period of time and at a percentage or amount (Ozuru & Wali, 2018). In addition, Davis and Jeineke (2003) expatiated that business success and performance are meant to be used side by side because both are related and evaluated in terms of their contribution to goal of the organization. Success in business happens when a company's competence in marketing constitutes organizational efficiency and effectiveness in market offerings that have value in a certain market segment; so it is a term used by marketing scholars to describe effectiveness and efficiency in performance of marketing strategies (Gerard, 2008). It refers to the measurement and evaluation of how effectively and



efficiently a business is achieving its objectives and delivering value to stakeholder (Neely et al., 2005). This definition highlights that business success involves measuring and evaluating the extent to which a business is effectively and efficiently achieving its objectives. It emphasizes the importance of delivering value to stakeholders, including shareholders, employees, customers, and the community.

According to Marr and Adams (2004), business success or performance is the financial and non-financial results achieved by a business in relation to its stated goals and targets. This definition focuses on the results achieved by a business, both financial and non-financial, in relation to its goals and targets. It recognizes that business success encompasses a range of metrics beyond financial measures, such as customer satisfaction, employee productivity, and market share.

Empirical Review

Renner (2022) examined the relationship between digital marketing initiatives and sales performance of telecommunication firms in South-South Nigeria. The population of the study consists of mobile telecommunication firms in South-South Nigeria. The result of the findings showed a significant relationship between digital marketing initiatives and sales performance of telecommunication firms in South-South Nigeria.

Folasade et al. (2018) examined the effect of E-marketing on the performance of the selected business organizations in Oyo State, Nigeria. The purposive method was used to select five manufacturing companies operating in Oyo State while the simple random sampling technique was used to select fifty respondents for the study. Data collected through structured questionnaire was analysed with the aid of Mean and Regression Analysis. Results of the analysis show that e-marketing has a significant impact on organizational performance measured by effective decision making, customer satisfaction and sales volume. The study also confirms that unstable power supply, lack of government support, low level of education of the owners/managers of business organizations and security of documents through e-commerce are major threats to the success of e-marketing adoption.

Mohammed and Ahmad (2020) carried out a study to determine the business performance of SMEs influenced by digital marketing applications with moderating roles of environmental factors. The study was cross-sectional and quantitative in nature. All items of variables were investigated on a 5-point scale to determine the relationship between proposed variables of framework. The sample for present study was the SMEs sector of UAE and was selected randomly. The list of SMEs was acquired from UAE directory that provided the list of operating firms under SMEs in the country in the Dubai region. The study was conducted on marketing managers and IT managers of SMEs to determine the proposed framework. The study found that hypothesis H1 was accepted but H2 and H3 were rejected on statistical grounds. The study did not observe any moderation in the proposed variables of the present research. This study is related to the present study in terms of the predictor variable but differs in instrumentation and area of coverage.

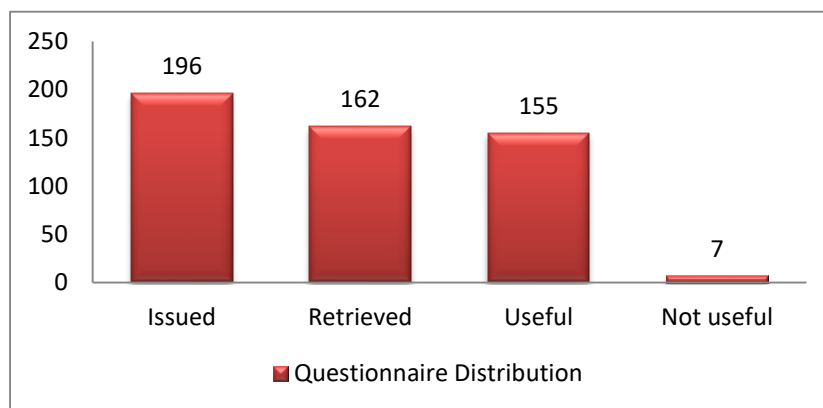


METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the correlational research design. The population of this study consisted of all the food and beverage firms registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria in the South-South Geopolitical Zone. The population comprised 196 marketing executives of 28 registered food and beverage manufacturing firms spread across the South-South zone, namely Cross River/Akwa-Ibom State branch, Edo/Delta State branch and Rivers/Bayelsa State branch. The main instrument that was used for data collection in this study was a structured questionnaire. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed in testing the predictor and criterion variable with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Data Analysis

Questionnaire Distribution and Retrieval

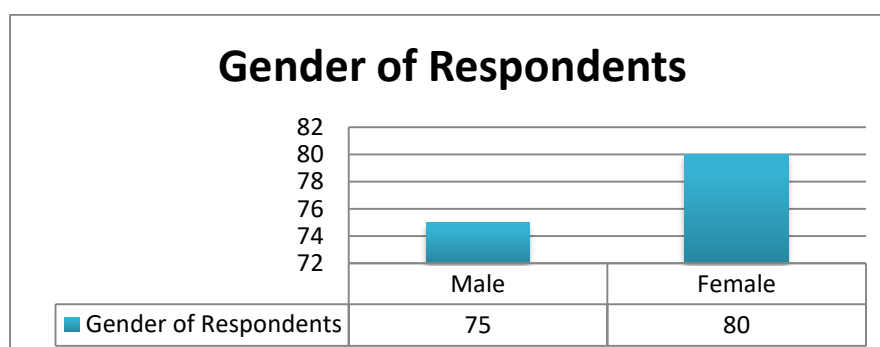


Source: Survey Data (2024).

The table above shows the questionnaire distribution and retrieval. The researcher issued 196 copies of the questionnaire and from consistent visits, he retrieved 162 copies; 155 copies were useful and 7 copies were not useful. This represents a 78% response rate and it was considered significant for the study.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the demography of the respondents and the selected demography considered in the process of this research are gender, age bracket and marital status of respondents.



Source: Survey Data (2024).



The above chart shows the gender of respondents as a means of ensuring that both males and females are represented in the study: 80 (61%) of the respondents are females and 75 (39%) are males. This shows that the majority of the respondents are females.

Hypothesis 1

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between content marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

			content marketing	sales growth
Pearson Correlation (r)	content marketing	Correlation	1.000	.634**
		Coefficient	.	.001
		Sig. (2 tailed)	155	155
	sales growth	Correlation	.634**	1.000
		Coefficient	.001	.
		Sig. (2 tailed)	155	155
		N		

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

The table above presents the result of bivariate analysis carried out between content marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. The result indicates that content marketing is strongly and positively correlated to sales growth ($r = .634^{**}$) and the symbol ** signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis (H_{o1}) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a significant relationship between content marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between content marketing and market share growth of food and beverages manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

			content marketing	market share growth
Pearson Correlation (r)	content marketing	Correlation	1.000	.754**
		Coefficient	.	.001
		Sig. (2 tailed)	155	155
	market share growth	Correlation	.754**	1.000
		Coefficient	.001	.
		Sig. (2 tailed)	155	155
		N		

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)



The table above contains the result of bivariate analysis carried out between content marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. The result shows that content marketing has a strong positive correlation with market share growth food and beverage firms ($r = .754^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol **. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between content marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

			social media marketing	social media marketing
Pearson Correlation (r)	social media marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.001
	N		155	155
	social media marketing	Correlation Coefficient	.718**	1.000
Sig. (2 tailed)		.001	.001	
N		155	155	

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

The table above presents the result of bivariate analysis carried out between social media marketing and sales growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. The result indicates that social media marketing has a strong and positive correlation with sales growth ($r = .718^{**}$) and the symbol ** signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is a very strong positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and sales growth in food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4

H₀₄: There is no significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth of food and beverage manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria.

			social media marketing	market share growth
Pearson Correlation (r)	social media marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.387**
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.001
	N		155	155



market share growth	Correlation	.387**	1.000
	Coefficient	.001	.
	Sig. (2 tailed)	155	155
	N		

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

The table above depicts the result of bivariate analysis carried out between social media marketing and market share growth in food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria. The result shows a weak positive correlation between social media marketing and market share growth ($r = .387^{**}$) and this correlation is significant at 0.01 level as indicated by the symbol **. As a result of this, we then reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternate hypothesis which states that there is a weak positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and market share growth in food and beverage firms in South-South Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

It was discovered in this study that a strong, positive and significant relationship exists between content marketing and sales growth and market share of food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South, Nigeria. This finding is supported by Kuenn (2016) who reported that content marketing significantly influences customer preference for a product or service. Duc (2013) also agreed with this finding and reported that posting valuable and relevant content on the company's web page tends to engage readers and viewers and this influences customer preference for the content posted.

This study found a strong positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and sales growth and market share of food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone of Nigeria. This finding is in line with the research conducted by Barhemmati and Ahmad (2015) which reported that reviews and product recommendations posted on social media platforms significantly influence sales growth for a product or service. Madni (2014) also supported this finding and revealed that many customers prefer to patronize and buy those products which their friends and relatives have posted on social media sites.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis carried out, it was confirmed that electronic marketing has a positive and significant relationship with business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone of Nigeria. The results of this study clearly confirmed this as a positive and significant relationship was found between content marketing and business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms. The study equally discovered a positive and significant relationship between social media marketing and business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms. Based on these findings, it was



concluded that electronic marketing has a positive and significant relationship with business success of food and beverage manufacturing firms in the South-South zone of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided based on the findings and conclusion:

1. Food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria, especially those that are yet to practice electronic marketing concepts such as content marketing, e-mail marketing and social media marketing, should begin to implement the concept in their organization as it would enable them to reach out to millions of customers around the world.
2. Food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria, particularly those that are currently experiencing low business success, should adopt electronic marketing such as content marketing, e-mail marketing and social media marketing as it would increase their level of business success.
3. Food and beverage manufacturing firms in Nigeria should engage in social media marketing by establishing their presence on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Whatsapp as it would increase their level of business success.

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