Integrated Marketing Communication and Its Relation to Sales Volume in Nigeria Transport Industry: Evidence from ABC Transport Ibadan

Isaac O.C. Onigbinde, PhD,
Department of Marketing, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso
E-mail: ioonigbinde@lautech.edu.ng, Tel: 08034505524

Remi Aworemi PhD
Department of Marketing, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso
E-mail: aworemi_remi@yahoo.com Tel: 08167878568
&

Makinde Akinwumi John
Department of Marketing, Ladoke Akintola University of Technology, Ogbomoso
Corresponding Author's e-mail: jamakinde73@gmail.com; Tel: 08035288165

Abstract
This study investigated the effectiveness of integrated marketing communication on sales volume of transport industry in Nigeria. The study adopted the correlation research design and an annual published data set for the period of 2018 to 2024 were sourced on sales volume from ABC Transport Nigeria, and primary data was obtained through questionnaire on marketing communication tools. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency, mean, standard deviation, pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that personal selling (β = .525, P (.000) <.05) had positive contribution to sales volume in ABC Transport while direct marketing (β = -.682, P (.000)<.05) had negative contribution to sales volume in ABC Transport. But advertising (β = -.037, P (.586)>.05) and public relations (β = .134, P (.210)>.05) had no significant contribution on sales volume in ABC Transport. Finding also revealed that marketing communication tools had positive significant relationship with sales volume in ABC Transport (r=.498, p (.000)<.05). The study therefore concluded marketing communication contributes significantly with sales volume of Nigeria transport industry. The study therefore recommended that Nigeria transport companies, in order to win more subscribers towards their services and products, should begin to develop a more pragmatic approach to communicating their services by choosing the most marketing communication strategies that has significant contribution to the sales volume.

Keywords: Integrated marketing communication, Sales volume, Transport Industry

INTRODUCTION
From earliest existence, man has been reliant on transportation to move from one place to another. This reliance has required government to invest significantly in transportation facilities. Investment in transportation systems has played an immense position in the expansion and development of cities and regions in Nigeria (Siyan, Eremionkhale & Makwe 2015). Mohammed (2019) notes that one of the most important factors that plays a fundamental role in a region's economic growth is the presence of a reliable and efficient transportation system. This is mainly due to the fact that a well developed transportation system provides adequate access to the region which in turn is a necessary condition for the efficient operation of manufacturing, retail, labour and housing markets. Transportation is a

wealth creation industry and critical to sustain sales volume because of its broader role in shaping the environment. Given the fact that transportation infrastructure is very crucial to the sales volume, the situation of Nigeria transportation infrastructure is at a poor state. Recent studies in Nigeria have shown that more than 3.5million passengers are been transported by road and less than 50% of the national road networks are in fair or good condition causing an average death of people per day (Adeniji 2020, Obi 2022). Inadequate investment on transportation infrastructure affects sales volume of transport sector. Therefore, to increase the essential collection of Nigerian transport services and facilities to meet the target of an increasingly sophisticated consumer public in a very short time requires marketing through different communication means.

In order to survive, remain relevant and avoid being rationalized, many transport companies in Nigeria have adopted some marketing communication strategies which embrace the five elements of the promotion mix, that is, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2014). However, these strategies need to be properly evaluated and be made more effective so as to increase the level of sales volume. This is desirable because, for any organisation to mobilize public opinion, gain support and fulfil its mandate, it must adopt marketing communication or promotion, which is a vital part of marketing mix (Baines, 2018). Kotler and Andreasen (1996) and Andreasen and Kotler (2003) established the compelling need for the business organisation to adopt market orientation and promotion in particular to reposition their services and uniqueness through effective dissemination of clearer and better focused messages to their target audience. Promotion constitutes one of the functional strategies available for any organisation to enhance its visibility and communicate effectively with stakeholders in the market place (Akinyele, 2010).

In Nigeria today, transport business operations are becoming challenging. In order to keep up with competition, especially for increasing transport service subscribers and growth, the transport players are forced to use marketing communication strategies to advertise their services and products. Generally, promotion as a marketing communication strategy, is a direct way by which organisations try to reach its public; and this is performed through the five elements of the promotion mix, that is, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relations and direct marketing (Akinyele 2020, Osuagwu 2011). Promotion, as one of the major elements of the marketing process, has become an important tool for transport companies to realise their objective of maintaining or increasing the number of subscribers, which could be determined through the number of digital transport line users and annual profit. Many transport companies depend on promotion to inform, persuade and influence their participant's attitudes. As a marketing communication strategy, promotion is important, and it is being adopted more frequently by many of the business sectors. This is to be expected since both profit and non-profit organisation face similar challenges in the market place. Many authors have discussed extensively on the importance of the market-oriented approach by profit- making organisations, Wymer (2006), Pope, Isely and Tutu (2009) but there are few works done on transport companies. As a result, it is imperative to find out the extent to which Nigerian transport companies are using marketing communication to enhance effectiveness and sales volume and to know the nature of marketing communication plans that transport companies have in place in order to gain and retain more subscribers. This study therefore investigates the effectiveness of integrated

marketing communication strategies being used Nigeria transport industry to enhance sales volume in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past, marketing was considered as a set of activities and processes used mainly by business organisations to stimulate demand and search for customers so as to create profit. At that time, it was convenient for people to associate marketing exclusively with only selling. Many definitions not only looked at marketing as business activities but as being concerned with only those activities that take place between when the goods and services have been produced or offered for customers. Marketing is a crucial human invention and embraces the activities we engage in to satisfy economic needs and wants (Nwokoye, 2004). The marketing concept has two phases. Firstly, it is a philosophy, an attitude, a perspective, or a management orientation that stresses customer satisfaction (McDaniel, Lamb & Hair, 2016). Secondly, marketing is a set of activities used to implement this philosophy (McDaniel, Lamb & Hair, 2016). The American Marketing Association's definition as cited in McDaniel et al (2016) views marketing as an organisational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering values to customers and for managing customers' relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders.

A number of studies has been carried out on the marketing concept (Harris & Ogbonna, 2001; Inn & Workman, 2004.) Marketing concept is earlier described by Kohli and Jaworski (1990) as a focus on the market which includes competitors and customers. The researchers provide insights on the essential role of marketing in an organization. The relationship between marketing and organisational performance has for a long time been receiving significant mention in the literature among marketing researchers. Many authors, including Jaworski and Kohli (1993) and Slater and Narver (1994), had long ago adduced a strong association between marketing and organizational performance; whereas Pelham and Wilson (1996) expressed a contrary view that the relationship between marketing and organizational performance is weak if nonexistent. The main focus of marketing, however, is the exchange of values between an organization and its customers with the objective of creating exchanges that seek to satisfy the needs and expectations of consumers. Critical to successful marketing process are two or more parties, having something of value to exchange and a common mutually agreeable way of communicating with one another. This process is made possible by promotion or marketing communication, which is used interchangeably in this study. Marketing communication is one of the elements of the marketing mix which refers to all the various types of planned messages used by organisations such as transport companies to create awareness and influence consumers such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct marketing, personal selling, packaging, events and sponsorship, customer service and product placement (Ouwersloot & Duncan, 2008). Marketing communication has been developed since 1950 and performed as a vital part of business and non-business organisations and it is playing a significant role in today's world (Kitchen, 1999). All organisations – large and small, commercial, government, charities, educational and other not-for-profit organisations – need to communicate with a wide range of stakeholders. This may be in order to get materials and services to undertake their business activities, or to collaborate and coordinate with others to secure suitable distribution outlets for their goods and services. Marketing communication provides a core activity so that all interested parties can understand the intentions of each other and appreciate the value of the goods and services being offered.

Many organisations have come to realise and appreciate the critical role of promotion activities to their overall performance and survival as competition continues to grow fiercely in every sector of the economy (Fill, 2005). In the past, only private profit making organisations felt compelled by competition and market forces to apply marketing communication tools. This was in order for them to satisfy their stakeholders need for profit and to gain competitive advantage. The situation has changed dramatically, as nonprofit and government-owned public institutions realise the need for marketing communication tools to gain attention and support for their programmes and sometimes to raise funds as well as advance the cause of public policy. Essentially, all organisations need to effectively and efficiently communicate with their target audience in order to sell their products and services, promote goodwill in the society and offer possible solutions to society's multiple challenges. For marketing communication and its tools to be effective and achieve the desired result, it must be properly integrated and aligned with all other marketing elements to form a cohesive strategy. There is therefore a need for all marketing communication tools such as advertisement, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion, etc., to be combined and managed to form an integrated marketing communication programme. Ability to combine many communications disciplines may be very helpful to developers of marketing communication messages in a form that is known as Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC). Through integrated marketing communication, audience/receiver can learn who sends the message, and for what purpose or benefit the message stands for. Integrated Marketing Communication is the planning and execution of all types of marketing communication needed for a product, brand, idea, company or place in order to satisfy a common set of objectives and support the positioning of promotion (Rehman and Ibrahim, 2011).
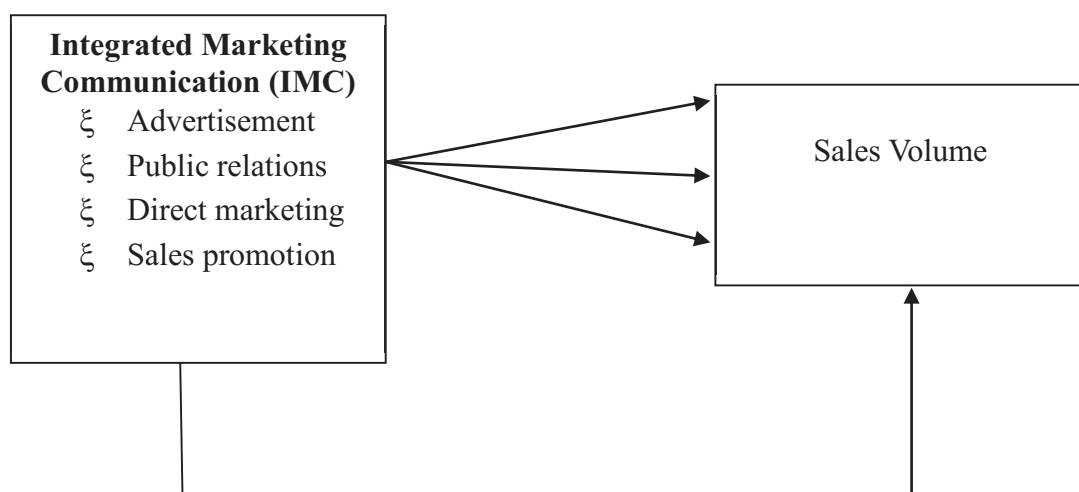
Integrated Marketing Communication Concept
The concept of integrated marketing communication has evolved over four fundamental stages, starting from tactical coordination of promotional elements, redefinition of the scope of marketing communication and application of information and communication technology to the financial and strategic integration (Panda, 2019). By definition, integrated marketing communication involves the merging of distinct communication functions in a way that allows an organization to speak with one voice and one look (Fitzerpatrik, 2015). IMC has recognized that all the trends by which firms touch customers must be related, aligned and coordinated, making it more than advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing programmes (Schultz, 2003). The American Association of Advertising Agencies defines IMC as a concept that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communication disciplines and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact. IMC enhances companies' ability to reach the right audience with the right message at the right time and in the right place. IMC is conceived as a step towards an integrated approach in achieving greater efficiency.

The concept of integrated marketing communication has become not only an important tool of marketing communication, but also an integral part of corporate communication strategies of many companies (Kitchen, Bringell, Li & Jones, 2014). Integrated Marketing Communication has evolved over a period of time from awareness level of integration to image level integration to functional integration to coordinated integration to consumer

based integration to stakeholder based integration and to relationship management integration (Panda, 2019). It has become a promotional tool along with other marketing mix components to gain advantage over competitors and reach the highest level of consumer satisfaction. IMC is a boost for promotional mix elements; whether it is advertising, direct marketing, interactive/internet marketing, sales promotion, publicity/public relations or personal selling, and combining these disciplines tend to provide greater consistency and maximum communication impact. It is expected that if Nigerian transport companies move away from their present use of traditional marketing communication tools and adopt integrated marketing communication, they will be able to achieve the desirable consistent impact on their respective subscribers and increase their market size, turnover and sales volume.

Successful marketing through the application of marketing communication tools requires a good understanding of the marketing environment and effective management of the marketing mix comprising the 4ps. It is through the effective management of the marketing mix with greater emphasis on promotion that an organization can successfully create necessary awareness and interest in order to influence the customers' attitude and behaviour. As a result of this discovery, this study attempted to examine the relationship between integrated marketing communication tools (advertisement, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion) and sales volume more closely with a view to finding concrete evidence, if any, of the influence of integrated marketing communication tools on sales volume of Nigeria transport industry.

Fig. 1: Conceptual Model of Integrated Marketing Communication and Sales Volume

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)
- ξ Advertisement
- ξ Public relations
- ξ Direct marketing
- ξ Sales promotion

Sales Volume

Source
The conceptual model of integrated marketing communication and sales volume has four components of independent variables which include advertisement, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion and sales volume (dependent variable) as illustrated in the figure 1 above. The model provides conceptual basis for defining and explaining the concepts of integrated marketing communication and sales volume, specifically, marketing communication of transport industry. Considering the location of integrated marketing communication in the model, it stands as independent variables to sales volume, which is dependent variable in the study. Sales volume in this context explains the level of growth of

Nigeria transport industry. As a way of ascertaining the effectiveness of marketing communication on transport industry growth, this conceptual model therefore theorizes the effect of integrated marketing communication tools (advertisement, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion) on sales volume.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the correlation research design. A correlation type of survey research design is majorly used for studying relationship or interrelationship that exists between dependent (criterion) and independent variables, at the same time (Kpolovie, 2010). An annual data set for the period of 2018 to 2024 were sourced on sales volume (i.e. market shares, sales volume and turnover) from ABC Transport Company in Nigeria, while primary data was obtained through questionnaire on market share of the type of marketing communication tools used and its influence on sales volume. Data obtained were analyzed using frequency, mean, standard deviation, pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance..

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Table 1: Marketing Communication Tools used by ABC Transport to enhance sales volume in Nigeria

s/No.	Marketing Communication Tools	1	2	3	4	Mean	Std.D
	Advertising						
1	Newspaper advertisement	39 (11.8%)	77 (23.3%)	175 (53.0%)	39 (11.8%)	2.65*	0.84
2	Radio jingles	77 (23.3%)	94 (28.5%)	119 (36.1%)	40 (12.1%)	2.37	0.97
3	Prime time television adverts	98 (29.7%)	116 (35.2%)	116 (35.2%)	-	2.05	0.81
4	Magazine Adverts	58 (17.6%)	96 (29.1%)	136 (41.2%)	40 (12.1%)	2.50*	0.92
5	Billboards	132 (40.0%)	100 (30.3%)	59 (17.9%)	39 (11.8%)	2.02	1.03
6	Electronic Billboard	114 (34.5%)	97 (29.4%)	100 (30.3%)	19 (5.8%)	2.07	0.94
	Direct Marketing						
7	Sourvenirs	20 (6.1%)	19 (5.8%)	155 (47.0%)	136 (41.2%)	3.23*	0.81
8	Flyers	58 (17.6%)	137 (41.5%)	96 (29.1%)	39 (11.8%)	2.35	0.90
9	Posters	95 (28.8%)	119 (36.1%)	97 (29.4%)	-	2.01	0.79
10	Direct mailing	40 (12.1%)	78 (23.6%)	97 (29.4%)	115 (34.8%)	2.87*	1.03
11	Bulk Short Message Service (SMS)	78 (23.6%)	19 (5.8%)	134 (40.6%)	99 (30.0%)	2.77*	1.12

12	Free bonus	79	94	118	39	2.35	0.97
		(23.9%)	(28.5%)	(35.8%)	(11.8%)		
	Public Relations						
13	Advertorial	79	116	115	20	2.23	0.88
		(23.9%)	(35.2%)	(34.8%)	(6.1%)		
14	Web sites	18	117	98	97	2.83*	0.92
		(5.5%)	(35.5%)	(29.7%)	(29.4%)		
15	Social Media	59	58	95	118	2.82*	1.11
		(17.9%)	(17.6%)	(28.8%)	(35.8%)		
	Personal selling						
16	Word of mouth	117	77	78	58	2.23	1.12
		(35.5%)	(23.3%)	(23.6%)	(17.6%)		
17	Reference from subscribers	19	58	154	99	3.01*	0.84
		(5.8%)	(17.6%)	(46.7%)	(30.0%)		
18	Reference from Agents	19	60	192	59	2.88*	0.76
		(5.8%)	(18.2%)	(58.2%)	(17.9%)		
19	Special bonus offers	18	77	157	78	2.89*	0.82
		(5.5%)	(23.3%)	(47.6%)	(23.6%)		

source

Key: 1 = not at all; 2 = rarely; 3 = often; 4 = very often;

Decision: Mean $\geq$ 2.50 represent often used;   Mean $\leq$ 2.50 not at all or rarely used
Table 1 above examined the types of marketing communication tools being used by ABC Transport to enhance sales volume in Nigeria at four rating scale of not at all, rarely, often and very often. Items indicated with one asterisk have the mean score greater than 2.50 and are considered often used while items with no asterisk have mean score lesser than 2.50 are considered rarely or not used. In the result, nineteen tools of four marketing communication tools (that is advertising, direct marketing, public relations and personal selling) were identified. In advertising, out of six advertising tools identified in the study, the result showed that newspaper advertisement (mean= 2.65) and magazine adverts (mean = 2.50) are often used by ABC Transport to enhance sales volume as agreed by over 53.3 % of the respondents, while radio jingles (mean= 2.37), prime time television adverts (mean = 2.05), billboards (mean = 2.02) and electronic billboard (mean = 2.07) are less or not used at all by ABC Transport as agreed by over 51.8% of the respondents. The result of the six direct marketing tools further revealed that over 70.6% of the respondents consent that Sourvenirs (mean = 3.23) was often used by ABC Transport to enhance sales volume, followed by bulk short message service (mean = 2.77) and direct mailing (mean = 2.87), while other direct marketing tools such as flyers, posters and Free bonus rarely or not used at all by ABC Transport as agreed by over 52.4% of the respondents. In the public relation strategy, the result showed that majority (that is, over 59.3%) of the respondents are of opinion that website (mean = 2.83) and social media (mean = 2.82) are often used by ABC Transport in enhancing sales volume while advertorial is rarely used as supported by 59.1% of the respondents. Finally, out of four personal selling tools identified in the study, the result signified that over 71.2% of the respondents established that reference from subscribers (mean = 3.01), special bonus offers (mean = 2.89) and reference from agents (mean = 2.88) are often used by ABC Transport to enhance sales volume while word of mouth is less used. Therefore, the result indicated that the marketing communication tools that were given

utmost attention and used in ABC Transport to enhance sales volume are Sourvenirs, followed by reference from subscribers, special bonus offers, reference from agents, direct mailing, website, social media, bulk SMS, newspaper advertisement and magazine advert. While marketing communication tools such as radio jingles, prime time television adverts, billboards, electronic billboards, flyers, posters, Free bonus, advertorial and word of mouth are rarely used by ABC Transport. This could be as a re sult of cost to be incurred in using these tools.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficients of Marketing communication tools and Sales volume

		Advertising	Direct Marketing	Public Relations	Sales volume
Advertising	Pearson Correlation	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)				
Direct Marketing	Pearson Correlation	.489**	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000			
Public Relations	Pearson Correlation	.649**	.821**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.856	.314	
Sales Volume	Pearson Correlation	.133*	.191**	.035	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	.000	.527	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.278	.000	.172	.000

source
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 2, show ed the correlation coefficients and significance values of marketing communication tools and sales volume in ABC Transport. Out of four integrated marketing communication tools identified in the study, the result reveal ed that there is positive significant relationship between advertising and sales volume (r= -.133, p(.016)<.05) and direct marketing and sales volume (r= -.191, p(.000)<.01), while public relations and personal selling have no significant relationship with sales volume in ABC Transport.

Table 3: Summary of Correlation Coefficient of Marketing communication tools and Sales volume

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	r	Sig.

Marketing communication tools	1.0027E2	35.94703		
			.498	.000
Sales volume	46.3212	8.44902		

The result in Table 3 showed the summary of correlation coefficient and significant values of marketing communication tools and sales volume in ABC Transport. The result revealed that marketing communication tools had positive significant relationship with sales volume in ABC Transport (r=.498, p(.000)<.05).

Table 4: Marketing communication tools have no significant contribution to Sales volume in ABC Transport

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	44.736	2.242		19.951	.000
	Advertising	-.074	.136	-.037	-.546	.586
	Direct Marketin	-1.644	.212	-.682	-7.745	.000
	Public Relations	.467	.371	.134	1.257	.210
	Personal Selling	2.088	.328	.525	6.373	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Sales volume
source

The result in Table 4, showed the relative contribution of each of the marketing communication tools (advertising, direct marketing, public relations and personal selling) sales volume in ABC Transport. The results revealed that personal selling (β = .525, P(.000)<.05) had positive contribution to sales volume in ABC Transport while direct marketing (β = -.682, P(.000)<.05) had negative contribution to sales volume in ABC Transports. But advertising (β = -.037, P(.586)>.05) and public relations (β = .134, P(.210)>.05) had no significant contribution on sales volume in ABC Transport. Therefore, among the four marketing communication tools used by ABC Transport, personal selling and direct marketing had significant contribution to sales volume while advertising and public relations have no significant contribution to sales volume.

Table: 5 Multiple Regression Analysis of Joint Prediction of Marketing communication tools on Sales volume in ABC Transport

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F Change	Sig.
Regression	5069.293	4	1267.323	22.365	.000a
Residual	18416.659	325	56.667		
Total	23485.952	329			
R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate			
.816	.806	7.52772			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Selling, Advertising, Direct Marketing, Public Relations
source

The result in Table 5 above revealed that the joint predictions of marketing communication tools (advertising, direct marketing, public relations and personal selling) on sales volume in ABC TRANSPORT which was significant at 0.05 level of significance ($F_{(4,325)} = 22.365$; $R^2 = .816$, Adj. $R^2 = .806$; $P(.000) < .05$). Statistically, R^2 value of 0.816 signifies that 82% of the variation of sales volume in ABC Transports was accounted for by the marketing communication tools used.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The critical position of marketing communication tools was established in this study as having significant influence on sales volume in Nigerian transport industry. The study revealed that there is significant relationship among the marketing communication tools and market share, sales volumes and turnover in ABC Transport. There is also a strong joint contribution of marketing communication tools (advertisement, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing) to sales volume. Based on the result, it was revealed that marketing communication tools when used together significantly exert influence on sales volume in transport sector. This is because none of the four elements could be used successfully in isolation of the others. The study revealed that advertisement, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing in this order were the most preferred communication tools by transport companies in Nigeria. These traditional marketing communication tools have always been favoured in creating and sustaining subscribers awareness to transport services and products. In view of the findings of this study, the study recommended that Nigeria transport companies, in order to win more subscribers towards their services and products,, should begin to develop a more pragmatic approach to communicating their services and products by choosing the most marketing communication strategies that has significant contribution to the sales volume. In addition, it is imperative for transport companies in Nigeria to consider marketing as a key success factor that is very important for the overall achievement of their objectives. This they can do by creating public relations and marketing units or divisions to be manned by professionals who have their forte in communication and marketing.

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