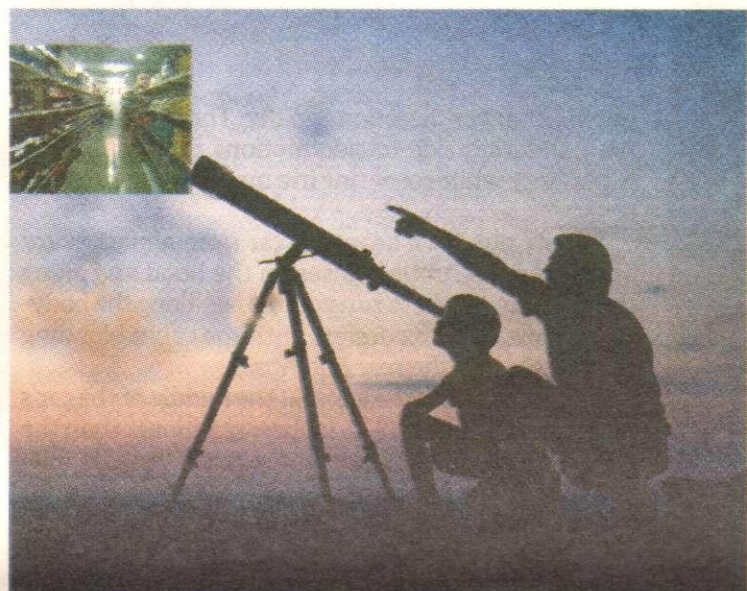


# Building consumer loyalty through 'Absolut' lens



**A**s the business landscape globally continues to get tougher, consumers are also getting more empowered. Unlike in the past where manufacturers assumed near total powers with dictated product offerings and price, today there is a tremendous paradigm shift with consumers now becoming the central focus of brand activities. The maxim, "Consumer is King", aptly captures this shift. Brands that intend to remain relevant in the long term, are fast adopting a consumer-centric business model for sustenance.

Marketers are placing huge emphasis on providing the best customer experience to engender consumer loyalty. A recent article in the Harvard Business Review "The Truth About Customer Experience"

defines it as your customer's end-to-end journey with you, and not just the key touch points or critical moments when customers interact with your organization. Customer experience is the cumulative impact of multiple touch points over time, which results in a real relationship feeling, or lack of it.

Creating sustainable consumer experiences and building loyalty overtime is never easy. It is a marketer's nightmare. Successful brands of today go beyond providing valuable products; they go further to engage consumers creatively and innovatively thereby building a deep relationship with them which ultimately leads to consumer loyalty and impressive overall market performance. The super brands of today all have these traits in common.

The quest by brands to create close affinity with consumers is evident in the billions of dollars spent on marketing initiatives yearly. If the amount of money spent on marketing efforts were a reflection of a brand's market performance, companies with enormous marketing budgets by default would be market leaders. But that is not the case, rather, creativity, innovation and deep consumer understanding sit at the heart of what makes successful brands tick.

One brand that has continued to resonate with consumers for its transformation, engagement, and creativity, is world renowned premium spirit, Absolut Vodka. Despite the tough competition in the Nigerian spirit market, Absolut Vodka has distinguished itself from the pack and enjoys huge loyalty as a result of the brand's drive to continually engage and provide its numerous consumers with wonderful experiences.

As a Reflection of the support for creativity and transformation in young individuals, Absolut Vodka recently partnered with MTV to organize this year's MTV Africa Music Awards (MAMA). The event is scheduled to take place in June at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Durban, South Africa.

Sola Oke, Marketing Director of Pernod Ricard Nigeria, marketing company of Absolut Vodka said that as part of Absolut's partnership with the MAMAs, there would be series of exciting parties to include a one of a kind Absolut Experience amongst

other activities in bars, supermarkets and clubs in Nigeria. He said, "These events are being held in order to share the Absolut experience with our consumers and also the opportunity to reward them with exciting packages which would include invites to the Absolut Experience Parties, the Road to MAMAs events in Lagos, and ultimately, exclusive VIP tickets to the MAMAs in South Africa."

Absolut is rewarding consumers for their loyalty to the premium vodka over the years. The brand is giving 5 lucky winners a chance to win VIP tickets to the MTV Africa Music Awards in South Africa. The ticket will provide an all-expense paid trip to South Africa with a special experience at the MTV Africa Music Awards in Durban.

Already three winners of the VIP ticket all-expense paid trip to witness the MAMAs live in South Africa have emerged. The first winner - Feyikemi Afolabi, a 25 year old native of Oyo State and sales representative in Lagos, who won a VIP ticket to the MAMAs through a lucky dip at the third cocktail party which took place at the popular Elegushi private beach. While the other two winners are Ayeni Oluwatobi, a 23 year old graduate of Economics from Babcock University and Simeon Ejie, a bar tender with Victoria Palace Hotel, won their VIP tickets at Shoprite and SPAR outlets in Lagos respectively.

The nominations for the MAMA

awards which were revealed a few weeks ago saw some new additions like the "Transform Today Award" sponsored by Absolut Vodka. The new award is to celebrate the power of young individuals to transform the image of Africa through their creativity and vision. Others are the Lifestyle Award, and the Personality of the Year Award.

Respected music video director from Nigeria, Clarence Peters, has been nominated in the newly introduced Absolut Transform Today Award category of the 2014 MTV Africa Music Awards. Other nominees in these category are; Tanzanian-born, South African/British-trained designer, Anisa Mpungwe; Leti Arts, a Ghana backed start-up, which brings Africa's rich mythology to life through cross-platform interactive digital comics and mobile games and Rasty, South African graffiti and tattoo artist.

Oke also added that: "In each generation there are a handful of artists who leave transformative marks and the MAMAs most certainly celebrate those artists who are at the cutting-edge of change in the music industry here in Africa. And Absolut will continue to push the boundaries of contemporary culture through creative collaborations, so we are thrilled to be a part of the awards that define and transform music in Africa."

MAMA is a celebration of African musicians and achievers who have made the most impact on the contemporary music scene throughout the year.

**G**oogle has overtaken Apple to become the world's most valuable global brand in the 2014 BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brand ranking, worth \$159 billion, an increase of 40% year on year.

After three years at the top, Apple slipped to number two position on the back of a 20% decline in brand value, to \$148 billion. Whilst Apple remains a top performing brand, there is a growing perception that it is no longer redefining technology for consumers, reflected by a lack of dramatic new product launches. The world's leading B2B brand, IBM, held onto its number three position with a brand value of \$108 billion.

Nick Cooper, Managing Direc-

## Google overtakes Apple to top 100 most valuable global brands

tor of Millward Brown Optimor in a statement commented on the number one brand, "Google has been hugely innovative in the last year with Google Glass, investments in artificial intelligence and a multitude of partnerships that see its Android operating system becoming embedded in other goods such as cars. All of this activity sends a very strong signal to consumers about what Google is about and it has coincided with a slowdown at Apple."

"This year's index highlights the end of the recession, with a strong recovery in valuations

and, for the first time, real growth across every category and the Top 100 as a whole," said David Roth, CEO of The Store, WPP. "What is



remarkable is the way that strong brands have led the recovery. Seventy-one of the brands listed in our 2014 Top 100 were there in 2008. Despite the financial turmoil and the digital disruption that have decimated many businesses during the last few years, these brands have remained in the ranking, proving the durability of strong brands."

Microsoft technology is in the fourth position with value of \$90.2 billion while McDonalds and Coca Cola were in the fifth and sixth position with values of \$85.706 b and \$80.883 billion respectively.

The BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands study, commissioned by WPP and conducted by Millward Brown Optimor, is now in its ninth year. It is a ranking that uses the views of potential and current buyers of a brand, alongside financial data, to calculate brand value.

The combined value of the Top 100 has nearly doubled since the first ranking was produced in 2006. The Top 100 today are worth \$2.9 trillion, an increase of 49% compared with the 2008 valuation, which marked the start of the banking and currency crisis.