

MARKETING EFFECTIVENESS IN NIGERIAN CONSTRUCTION: STRATEGIES AND INSIGHTS

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Abstract

Marketing is a global practice essential for the survival and growth of companies, emphasizing the need to align products and services with customer demands (Waugh, 2004; Arslan et al., 2009). Effective marketing is particularly crucial in competitive environments, where it significantly impacts overall business success (Polat and Donmez, 2010). However, the construction industry has historically undervalued marketing as a management function. Many constructions professionals regard marketing as non-essential, leading to its minimal integration into organizational structures and slow adoption where it is included (Winter and Preece, 2000; Bennett, 2005; Jaafar et al., 2008; Arslan et al., 2009). This paper explores the significance of marketing in the construction sector, examining how effective marketing strategies can enhance business performance and competitive edge. The study underscores the need for greater emphasis on marketing within construction firms to drive growth and adapt to evolving market demands.

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is practiced all over the world and it is referred to as the activity of getting company to sell what the customer “wants” (goods or services). Its importance for the survival of companies cannot be overlooked (Waugh, 2004; Arslan et al., 2009). Polat and Donmez (2010) established that effective marketing plays an important role in the overall success of companies and is critical for any business to grow in the competitive environment. Although, most construction professionals perceived marketing as an unimportant management function therefore not integrated into the structure of the firms and where it was incorporated, the level of adoption was slow (Winter and Preece, 2000; Bennett, 2005; Jaafar et al., 2008; Arslan et al., 2009). Recently, there is an increasing recognition that marketing has an important role to play in the enhancement of the performance of the construction profession (Arditi et al., 2008; Chen and Muhamed, 2008; Arslan et al., 2009; Polat, 2010; Polat and Donmez, 2010). The American Marketing

Association Board of Directors in 2007 defined marketing as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners

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and society at large (Polat and Donmez, 2010). It can also be defined in relation to construction as finding information about the economy, the client and the competition.

According to Adegbile (2008), marketing of professional service is defined as the creation of client satisfying services at a profit to the firm. The professionals in the construction industry are quantity surveyors, architects, civil and building contractors, estate surveyors, structural and services engineers. Pryor (2001) established that the entire construction industry is based on the concept of making sure that the owner receives what he requests. Therefore, the professionals in the construction industry bring together expertise and skill to work towards a common goal of satisfying their client. Adegbile (2008) and Jaafar et al. (2008) emphasized that the construction professional firms differ from all other industries. They provide highly customized services and thus cannot apply many of the marketing management principles developed for product-based industry. Also, professional services are highly personalized and involve the skill of individual service providers. However, realizing the nature of the construction business environment, it is vital to develop appropriate marketing practice to be adopted by the professionals for survival in the industry. The construction industry is invariably a significant part of the process of developing economy. The process of economic development can be enhanced and accelerated by professional services inputs (McNamara, 1999). The degree to which service dominates the economy and the important role played by this sector in Nigeria and other countries was noted by Shen and Dong (2000), Mogbo (2001), Central Bank of Nigeria (2004), Lee et al. (2008), Dantata (2007) and Arslan et al. (2009). Research established that improved professional services through effective marketing can lead to an enhanced economy. It is therefore apparent that effective marketing is vital for Nigerian construction professionals.

In view of this, this paper identified marketing principles and strategies, assessed their level of adoption and examined the extent of effectiveness and level of preference with a view to improving Nigerian construction professional performance in the global competitive environment.

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON MARKETING IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

There are many studies on the concept of marketing in the construction industry. Morgan (1990) investigated marketing of consulting engineering services and discovered that very few firms had their own marketing departments. Yisa et al. (1996) proposed a framework for improving the effectiveness of the marketing function within the construction enterprises. They concluded that a practical approach for formulating, implementing and evaluating corporate marketing programmes can be represented by the framework. Dikmen et al. (2005) examined the perception and attitude of Turkish contractors against marketing. They found that marketing capability was not seen as a strategic success factor by the majority of the contractors. Jaafar et al. (2008) also studied the marketing practices of engineering consulting firms in Malaysia. Their analysis showed that many civil and structural consultancy firms had neither marketing departments nor employees specifically responsible for marketing. Ganah et al. (2008) investigated marketing strategies in the construction industry and the challenges facing small to medium enterprises in the development of these strategies. They discovered that there was a lack of understanding of marketing principles within small to medium enterprises and concluded that majority of construction firms were yet to adopt marketing as a cornerstone of strategy and management. Arslan et al. (2009) investigated the critical factors affecting marketing success of construction companies in the housing sector of Turkey. They identified company image and customer satisfaction as vital factors for successful marketing in construction business. Polat and Donmez (2010) examined the marketing management functions of Turkish construction companies and revealed that Turkish contractors made use of marketing management functions to some extent.

Ene (1995) and Adegbile (2008) assessed marketing practices among Nigerian construction firms and concluded that there was little or no use of marketing in the Nigerian construction industry. They, therefore, suggested the need for awareness on the importance of marketing as a tool to withstand the stiff competition in the Nigerian construction business environment. Despite the fact that many research works on marketing exist, few have been recorded on strategies used by Nigerian construction professionals in marketing their services. Hence, this paper identified marketing strategies used by professionals, examined the degree of effectiveness and assessed the level of preference attached to them by the Nigerian construction professionals with a view to creating awareness on marketing practice as an important tool in improving professional success rate and survival in a competitive environment.

Marketing strategies adopted by construction professionals

Marketing strategy is a managerial process of analyzing market opportunities and choosing marketing position that serves the company's purpose and objectives. It is the company's response to external environment and consistent set of principles through which company hopes to achieve its long run customer and profit objectives in a competitive environment. Marketing strategies are means by which professional firms sell their services to their intending clients. They play an important role in the success of a construction company in this highly competitive industry. Ganah et al. (2008) offered generic strategies to be adopted by any business but this may not always be applicable to the construction industry due to its nature. Zeithaml et al. (1985) suggested various strategies for problems stemming from unique service features. These include creating strong organization image, using cost accounting to help set prices, engaging in post-purchase communications, managing consumers, using multisite locations, e.t.c. Lee et al. (2008) identified marketing strategies of Korea's housing construction firms and classified them as green, well-being and ubiquitous. Several strategies used by different researchers have been drawn from literature, out of which the following were indentified for discussion in this paper.

Location of the firm

This is of importance to professional service firms. There are areas where services are regularly in demand especially areas of high concentration of construction activities. It will, therefore, be of benefit to the firms if located in such places to make effective sales. However, Zeithaml et al. (1995) included the use of multisite locations to cater for firms which have projects in different locations at the same time. However, there is need for caution in terms of proper monitoring of these locations for well representation of the firms.

Professional-client relationship

Good relationship between the client and the professionals makes a good strategy, as courteous service and reliability of the firm's past performance encourage the clients to come back for further services. Zeithaml et al. (1995) recommended managing consumers (clients) as one of the strategies to solve the problem of inseparability in construction services. Winter and Preece (2000) stressed the need for relationship marketing as a strategy for improved performance in construction industry. Jafaar et al. (2008) identified client relations/contact as the most important category of marketing strategies because professional services usually involved a high degree of interaction with the client. Polat and Donmez (2010) recognized the importance of building strong relationship with customers and marketing partners to achieve the desired objectives.

Business promotion

This is a method of securing understanding between the client and the professionals for the purpose of bringing about a favourable buying action and at the long run, a long-lasting confidence in the firm. Zeithaml et al. (1995) described this as part of specific effort to encourage customers to tell others about their services. It is worth noting that promotional techniques adopted in other sectors may not be applicable in the construction industry due to the

uniqueness of this sector. Polat and Donmez (2010) listed various promotion parameters that can be used in the construction industry. However, Ganah et al. (2008) was of the opinion that much attention should not be given to „promotion“ as it makes professionals to focus more on the market or sales rather than the customers. In addition, there is need to exercise caution on the use of this strategy not to go against the professional ethics.

Professional contract

This strategy may involve members of other related professions to form a link with prospective client who needs their services. Ganah et al. (2008) referred to this as partnering. Construction Industry Institute (CII, 1991) highlighted the expected benefits of partnering to include improved efficiency, cost-effectiveness, increased opportunity for innovation, and the continuous improvement of quality products and services. Ganah et al. (2008) established that construction industry is shifting toward partnering which can lead to adding value to the professional organizations. This can also take the form of a professional recommending another professional colleague to a prospective client.

Marketing mix (4 ps)

The marketing mix is a rational approach based around transaction cost and has dominated marketing concepts and practice over for a long period of time (Smyth, 1996). Polat and Donmez (2010) opined that companies should create a successful mix of the right product, sold at the right price, in the right place, and using the most suitable promotion when marketing their products or services. They established that marketing mix theory has been successful in the manufacturing industry. However, it provides little help to the construction industry due to the fact that construction is mainly service oriented (Maloney, 2002; Cheah and Garvin, 2004; Skitmore and Smyth, 2007; Polat and Donmez, 2010). It composed of the four P's: product, prices, place (distribution) and promotion. These elements appear as core decision variables in any marketing plan. In construction, place is determined by the project's location, the spread of the offices should be the primary marketing decisions for the professionals to attract clients. Price, in this case the fee is obviously important, yet the significance of the fee is less important than the contribution the product makes to the overall project price (Smyth, 1996).

In addition to this, promotion is important in the sense that the professionals in the construction industry enhance the contract offered to the client through effective communication of the benefits of product.

Research as a marketing strategy

There is an increasing recognition that research has an important role to perform in the enhancement of the construction profession performance (McNamara, 1999).

Rating	Level of usage	Degree of effectiveness	Level of preference
1	Not used	Not effective	Not preferred
2	Less frequently used	Less effective	Less preferred
3	Frequently used	Effective	Preferred
4	More frequently used	More effective	More preferred
5	Most frequently used	Most effective	Most preferred

Arditi and Davis (1988), Smyth (1996), McNamara (1998) and Polat and Donmez (2010) identified marketing research as one of the construction marketing activities and a powerful strategy. Potential benefits that can be derived in terms of enhancements in economic, social and political systems are enormous if research is given desired attention as a marketing strategy.

Benefits of effective marketing

Many benefits of effective marketing to construction have been highlighted by researchers (McNamara, 1999; Ngowi et al., 2000; Stewart et al., 2003; Dikmen et al., 2005; Ganah et al., 2008; Arslan et al., 2009; Polat and Donmez, 2010). This includes survival of the firms, growth sustainability, increase in profits, increase in sales, increase in client satisfaction, development of company image, development of products/services, better competitive advantage, creation of opportunity to acquire knowledge and understanding of construction marketing (business link), entrance to new markets, creation of new markets, improvement of customer loyalty, improvement of reputation, improvement of total quality, e.t.c. Hence, properly used strategies will result in increase in profit, creation of awareness, professional appreciation by the public, increase in integration between related professionals, introduction of new trends and new development that makes the professional more attractive and therefore leads to competitive advantage.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The literature review provided a basis for developing the questionnaire used in surveying professional firms. This was conducted to appraise the existing marketing strategies with a view to determining their frequency of usage and effectiveness of these strategies for the purpose of achieving improved patronage from the construction clients.

Data collection

The population of this study was the consultancy and construction firms in Southwestern Nigeria. The targeted respondents were the architects, builders, the quantity surveyors and the engineers. Their lists were obtained from the directories of their professional bodies (Nigerian Institute of Architect, Nigerian Institute of Building, Nigerian Institute of Quantity Surveyors and Nigerian Society of Engineers respectively). Sixty (60) members from each of these professionals were selected using systematic sampling. From the list of registered firms arranged alphabetically, the first and the subsequent even numbers were chosen until the targeted 60th sample was chosen. The questionnaire survey was used for this study; this questionnaire was divided into 3 sections: the first section focused on the respondent's general information such as year of existence of the firm, designation of the respondents, professional qualifications as well as year of professional experience. The second section focused on questions relating to the firms marketing activities and issues relating to marketing strategies used by the surveyed firms, their effectiveness and the level of preference. The third section focused on the expected outcomes of improving the marketing strategy. The respondents' opinions on importance of marketing of professional services were examined using five-point Likert scale where 1 represented „strongly disagree“ and 5 represented „strongly agree“. Six marketing strategies (professional-client relationship, professional contract, marketing mix (4 ps - product, price, place and promotion), location of firm, research and promotion) from literature (Zeitham et al., 1985; Arditi and Davis, 1988; Marr et al., 1996; Smyth, 1996; McNamara, 1999; Ganah et al., 2008; Jaafar et al., 2008; Polat and Donmez, 2010) were focused in this paper.

Respondents were requested to express their opinion on the level of usage, effectiveness and preference attached to each marketing strategy using Likert scale of 1 to 5. Table 1 shows the rating systems used in this paper. Two hundred and forty (240) copies of questionnaires were administered on the sampled respondents, out of which 156 were collected and found useful for analysis. The data were analyzed using mean response analysis (MRA) adapted from Ojo and Odediran (2010). It was used to determine the prominent, effective and preferred marketing strategies. This method of analysis has been employed by many construction management researchers (Akintoye, 2000; Wang et al., 2001; Odeyinka, 2003). The mean score is determined as follows:

$$5n_5 + 4n_4 + 3n_3 + 2n_2 + 1n_1 \text{ Mean score} = (n_5 + n_4 + n_3 + n_2 + n_1)$$

Where n_1 = number of respondents who picked 1; n_2 = number of respondents who picked 2; n_3 = number of respondents who picked 3; n_4 = number of respondents who picked 4 and n_5 = number of respondents who picked 5.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent's general information

The result from Table 2 revealed that out of one hundred and fifty-six (156) responding professionals, 47 (30%) were quantity surveyors, 42 (27%) were builders, 23 (15%) were architects while 31 (20%) were engineers. Eighty-five percent (85%) of them were members of different professional bodies. Eighty-three percent (83%) of the respondents had more than 10 years of professional experience in the construction industry, with the majority (73%) of them falling within 11 to 20 years of experience and 70% of the firms had been established for more than 10 years. The result from Table 2 revealed that the Nigerian construction professionals were well represented; professionally qualified and had many years of working experience to their credit. Hence, the information supplied by them can be relied upon.

Table 2. General information of the respondents.

Designation of respondent			
Responding officer	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
No response	13	8.33	8.33
Quantity surveyor	47	30.13	38.46
Contractors	42	26.92	65.38
Architect	23	14.74	80.13
Engineer	31	19.87	100.00
Total	156	100.00	

Professional qualification of respondent			
Professional qualification	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
No response	23	14.74	14.74
MNIOB	32	20.51	35.26
MNIQS	44	28.21	63.46
MNIA	31	19.88	83.33
MNSE	26	16.67	100.00
Total	156	100.00	

Year(s) of professional experience			
Years	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
1-5	5	3.21	3.21
6-10	22	14.10	17.31
11-15	46	29.49	46.79
16-20	71	45.51	92.31
21-30	7	4.49	96.79
Above 30	5	3.21	100.00
Total	156	100.00	

Year(s) of existence of the firm

Year of existence of the firm	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative percent (%)
1-5	10	6.41	6.41
6-10	27	17.31	23.72
11-15	53	33.97	57.69
16-20	40	25.64	83.33
21-30	15	9.62	92.99
Above 30	11	7.05	100.00
Total	156	100.00	

Marketing practice in the Nigerian construction industry

Respondents were requested to express their opinion on the marketing practice by indicating their level of agreement with issues relating to marketing practice. Majority of the surveyed professionals agreed with the issues of marketing practice as indicated in Table 3, 73% agreed that marketing is a concept of matching services to wants in the market place, 89% agreed that it creates and maintains relationships that will satisfy individual and organisation objectives, 94% agreed that it identifies potential clients and keeps them informed about a firms capability and 91% of them agreed that it is essential; however, (87%) indicated that the level at which marketing is practiced in the construction industry is very low. This is in agreement with Winter and Preece (2000), Bennett (2005), Adegbile (2008), Jaafar et al. (2008) and Arslan et al. (2009). It was clear from the result that most Nigerian construction professionals recognized the importance of marketing as a necessary tool for organizations development, but there was an indication that the level of practice of marketing among them is inadequate. Therefore, there is a need for positive change in professionals' attitude to marketing practice in Nigeria.

Marketing should be encouraged and practiced appropriately among the Nigerian construction professionals to withstand the stiff competition in the construction environment.

Table 3. Marketing practice in the Nigerian construction industry.

Marketing issues	Strongly agree F (%)	Agree (%)	F Disagree (%)	F Strongly disagree (%)	Total F (%)
It is a concept of matching services to wants in the market place.	61 (39.10)	54 (34.62)	18 (11.54)	23 (14.74)	156 (100)
It creates and maintains relationships that will satisfy individual and organisation objectives.	51 (32.69)	88 (56.41)	9 (5.77)	8 (5.13)	156 (100)
It identifies potential clients and keeps them informed about a firms capability.	56 (35.90)	91 (58.33)	6 (3.85)	3 (1.92)	156 (100)
Marketing is essential.	49 (31.41)	94 (60.26)	8 (5.13)	5 (3.21)	156 (100)
Level of practice is low.	85 (54.49)	52 (33.33)	9 (5.77)	10 (6.41)	156 (100)

Table 4. Assessment of marketing strategies based on frequency of usage, degree of effectiveness and level of preference.

Marketing strategy	Identified marketing strategies and their frequency of usage	Effectiveness of the identified marketing strategies	Preferred marketing strategy
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	MRA	Rank	MRA	Rank	MRA	Rank
Professional - client relationship	4.01	1	4.31	1	3.60	3
Professional contract	3.79	2	4.13	2	3.97	2
Marketing mix (4 ps)	3.39	3	2.90	4	4.18	1
Location of firm	3.33	4	3.80	3	3.48	4
Research	1.34	5	1.98	5	3.03	6
Promotion	1.14	6	1.65	6	3.46	5

Marketing strategies used in the Nigerian construction industry - Level of usage and effectiveness

Marketing strategies used by professionals in the construction industry were identified and listed for the respondents to rate based on the frequency of usage. Despite the fact that the level of marketing practice was very low, it was observed that all the strategies were recognized and used by the respondents except research and promotion (Table 4). The most frequently used marketing strategy was professional–client relationship (MRA = 4.01), other frequently used strategies were professional contract (MRA = 3.79), marketing mix (MRA = 3.39) and location of the firm (MRA = 3.33). Rarely used strategies from the findings were research (MRA = 1.34) and promotion (MRA = 1.14). Effectiveness of marketing strategies in construction industry was also assessed; the results (Table 4) indicated that professional–client relationship was the most effective marketing strategy (MRA = 4.31) followed by professional contract (MRA = 4.13) and location of the firm (MRA = 3.80) while research (MRA = 1.98) and promotion (MRA = 1.65) were less effective marketing strategies and serve both their immediate and long term needs. There is need to build strong and lasting relationship with customers and marketing partners.

Good relationship between the client and the professionals makes a good strategy, as previous courteous services of the firm and the reliability of its past performance makes the clients come back for further services. It is important to note that it is good to keep the existing clients by delivering satisfaction while attracting new ones, good relationship with them can also serve as a means of advertisement because they will introduce new clients. The result is in agreement with Winter and Preece (2000), Ganah et al. (2008), Jaafar et al. (2008) and Polat and Donmez (2010) who emphasized on the importance of keeping strong and lasting relationship with the clients. Relationship between the clients and professionals will determine, to a great extent, flow of opportunities experienced by construction professionals. In view of this, the professionals should exploit this strategy to improve clients' patronage. Professional contract was ranked second frequently used and effective strategy; this implied that the Nigerian construction professionals attached great importance to collaborative works. Joint efforts of the construction professionals will enhance performance and productivity; this is because no professional will like to work with lazy or negligent colleague so as to protect his image and integrity. Diligent professionals will prefer to work together, form business link to source for jobs. This strategy may be an opportunity for regular flow of jobs; it may help in keeping the firms in business even during austere period. Professional contract which can be referred to as partnering method of procurement can serve as a good marketing strategy if properly adopted. It can increase opportunity for innovation, enhance understanding and knowledge about construction marketing and also improve quality of services rendered and the product. This result concurred with Ganah et al. (2008) who encouraged the use of partnering for achieving sustainable growth.

Research and promotion were rarely used by the professionals in the Nigerian construction industry. This is possible since these strategies were not well known and therefore could not have been effective. This may be expected and in agreement with NcNamara (1999) and Jaafar et al. (2008) who noted that professional hardly

embraced research as marketing strategy. However, creating awareness about these strategies is essential to develop professional's interest toward their application. There is need for the construction professionals to develop these strategies for improved productivity and profit. Several authors have indicated that there were benefits of research as marketing strategy (Zeithaml et al., 1985; Smyth, 1996; McNamara, 1999; Ganah et al., 2008; Polat and Donmez, 2010). Research focused on analyzing business opportunities in the market, collecting information about potential customers, competitors and the marketing environment so as to analyze the company's strength and weakness. Research provides opportunity of familiarization with new and current development and technology in the profession. Application of these new innovations in the services rendered by the firm will promote the firm and attract more clients. In addition, it also increases opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding about construction marketing. Marketing in relation to construction is finding information about the economy, the client and the competition which is the main function of research. Zeithaml et al. (1985) included regular collection of information about the customers' needs as part of strategies used among services firms. Therefore, it is imperative to enlighten the professionals that research has an important role to perform in the enhancement of the performance of their profession as indicated by McNamara (1999). Although, professionals had displayed little or no interest towards research, there were strong indications that the wrong attitude towards research is changing (Ganah et al., 2008).

The Agenda for Change (Lay, 1998) imposed the need for research about the competitive economic markets of which construction forms part. Then, research as marketing strategy should be embraced to enhance consultancy skills and operational effectiveness. Promotion as a marketing strategy among construction professionals has not been encouraged. This was also confirmed from Jaafar et al. (2008) who noted that some professional associations banned the use of promotional activities. This may be due to the incompatibility of marketing procedure (especially promotion) with professional ethics, but appropriate promotional means which is in accordance with the professional ethics will also speak better about the profession. Hence, considering the merits of promotion as marketing strategy, it should be encouraged for adoption but with strict adherence to the professional ethics.

Level of preference attached to the identified strategies

The professionals in the construction industry were further asked to express their level of preference in using the identified marketing strategies if there is a request for change in the currently used strategy. All the strategies were preferred as revealed by their high MRA values ranged from 4.18 to 3.03 (Table 4). However, marketing mix (MRA = 4.18) was the most preferred strategy, followed by professional contract (MRA = 3.97) and professional-client relationship (MRA = 3.60). This result is appropriate because marketing mix consists of variables (place, price, product and promotion) that interact with one another and depend on one another to a certain extent. The variables of marketing mix can be broken down into some of the other strategies which implied that marketing mix can be seen as combination of other strategies like location of firm (place), good relationship which can be developed through good promotional means (promotion) and research will bring about improved product and appropriate price. However, this strategy was not widely adopted; this might be due to the fact that it provided little help to the construction industry when comparing with other sectors. High level of preference attached to this strategy by the Nigerian construction professionals may be due to the level of awareness on the importance of marketing mix variables and interactions between these variables. It is important to note that this strategy has been modified to take care of the uniqueness of the construction industry. Since services are intangible, the marketing mix is extended to include people, physical evidence and process. The findings from this study confirmed the empirical studies of Morgan and Morgan (1991), Fellows and Langford (1993), Arditi et al. (2008)

and Polat and Donmez (2010). It is important that the construction professionals adopt this strategy for improved productivity.

The least preferred strategies were research and promotion. The result may be due to the stressful and expensive nature of carrying out a productive research, and the strict conditions for the use of promotional activities of marketing as laid down by the professional ethics and code of conduct. These may discourage the construction professionals in adopting research and promotion as marketing strategies. However, McNamara (1999) identified research as competitive strategy which based on quality and technical superiority for professional improvement. Also, Kotler and Armstrong (2005) acknowledged promotion as a means of getting clients' attention. Therefore, considering the benefits, these strategies should be developed and exploited for marketing purposes. The result from Table 5 showed the effect of improving marketing strategies on services of the construction professionals. The surveyed professionals agreed that all the listed effect factors were the indicators of improved construction professional services as evident by their MRA values which ranged from 4.86 to 3.87. These effects were good relationship with client (MRA = 4.86), acquiring contract (MRA = 4.76), creation of awareness (MRA = 4.49), build and maintain image of the firm (MRA = 4.21) and building of sales (MRA = 3.87). This is in agreement with Stewart et al. (2003), Dikmen et al. (2005), Ganah et al. (2008), Arslan et al. (2009) and Polat and Donmez (2010).

Marketing strategies increase clients' awareness of the services rendered by the professionals, thereby arousing clients' interest to do business with them which implied growth in clientele. Thus, the more the awareness created by the professionals, the more the clients' patronage and of course the more the profit made by the firm. Consequently, this will also improve the status of the firm and thereafter build up their sales.

Table 5. Effect of improved marketing strategy on the professional services.

Effect	MRA	Rank
Good relationship with client	4.86	1
Acquiring contract	4.76	2
Creation of awareness	4.49	3
Build and maintain image of the firm	4.21	4
Building of sales	3.87	5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This paper focused on effective marketing strategies in Nigerian construction industry and concluded that the level of practice of marketing among professionals in Nigerian construction industry was very low and inadequate compared to the level and keenness of competition in Nigerian construction industry. Marketing strategies often used in the Nigerian construction industry to market professional services included professional– client relationship and professional contract while research and promotion were rarely used as marketing strategies by Nigerian construction professionals. Professional –client relationship, professional contract and location of the firm were effective marketing strategies identified by professionals in the Nigerian construction industry, professional –client relationship being the most effective while research and promotion were least effective marketing strategies used. Adoption of appropriate marketing strategies by professionals within the Nigerian construction industry will result into acquiring more contracts, creating more awareness about their services, building of sales and maintenance of good and continuous relationship with their clients. The professionals in

Nigerian construction industry should take cognizance of the benefits of adopting effective marketing strategies, allow for the use of research and promotion as marketing strategies within the context of the professional ethics as they could be adopted for improved quality and productivity of professional services in Nigeria.

Interaction of these strategies will aid in sustainability of the firms and ability to withstand the stiff competition within the national and international construction market.

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