

MOBILE MARKETING AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY OF EATERIES IN ASABA DELTA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Mobile marketing is gaining attention over traditional marketing as a new marketing strategy due to its perceived ease of use and usefulness in terms of instant two ways of interaction, cost-effective, measurability, ubiquitous, user-friendly, engagement, and accessibility to millions of passionate mobile users. Notwithstanding the trend of mobile marketing and its impact on customer loyalty and other marketing performances, traditional marketing is still widely practiced among the eateries in Asaba. This study ascertained the interplay between mobile marketing and customer loyalty of eateries in Asaba, Delta State. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design in a non-contrived setting and collected data from respondents using a structured questionnaire. The Spearman's Rank Order Correlation was employed to test the hypotheses. The study observed that mobile marketing has a positive and statistically significant relationship with customer loyalty expressed through resistance to switching and repeat patronage. The study thus concluded that a significant correlation exists between mobile marketing and customer loyalty. As such, eateries in Asaba should explore mobile marketing to enhance customer loyalty. Also, be innovative in line with the contemporary business environment and consumer tastes and preferences.

Keywords: Mobile Marketing, Customer Loyalty, Resistance to Switching, Repeat Patronage

INTRODUCTION

The eateries business is lucrative and competitive because food is a necessity. The dynamic nature of the contemporary business environment, the quickly evolving value requirements of customers, and the prevalence of competition have made it imperative for eateries to be innovative in exploring novel approaches to gain competitive advantage (Didia & Idenedo, 2017; Igwe et al., 2020). In Asaba, a vibrant city with a growing culinary scene, the adoption of mobile marketing is becoming increasingly significant for eateries aiming to enhance their customer engagement and boost patronage. The shift towards mobile technology provides a powerful platform for eateries such as Dominos and others in Asaba Delta State to connect with diners, streamline operations, and offer personalized experiences. The adoption of mobile marketing offers customers real-time access. It allows them to share experiences and opinions in real-time as per ways to serve them better and enable the organization to communicate the value of their product in a manner to gain a prime place in a competitive space (Idenedo et al., 2020; Didia & Otite, 2017).

Raymond (2011) sees mobile marketing as an interactive process combining push and pull marketing actions because of user permission and acceptance features. Mobile marketing is among the trending marketing strategies in the contemporary business world due to the rapid growth in sales of smartphones and its specific features like ultra-portability and location-sensitivity, it being independent of any other channel and its usage throughout the world (Shankar & Yadav, 2010; Preetham, 2015). Mobile marketing as defined by Idenedo et al. (2020), is the art of marketing your business to appeal to mobile device users when done right, mobile marketing provides customers or potential customers using smartphones with personalized, time and location-sensitive information so that they can get what they need exactly when they need it, even if they are on the go.

Though, mobile marketing is gaining attention over traditional marketing as a new marketing strategy as a result of its perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness in terms of instant two ways of interaction, cost-effective, measurability, ubiquitous, user-friendly, engagement, and

accessibility to millions of passionate mobile user (Nazari et al., 2018). Notwithstanding the trend of mobile marketing and its impact on customer loyalty and other marketing performances, traditional marketing is still widely practiced among the eateries in Asaba. Customers' tastes and preferences change over time and they will prefer to patronize and be loyal to an eatery that offers mobile services. As such, eateries in Asaba must take advantage of mobile marketing to improve customer loyalty. Premise on this, the study seeks to determine mobile marketing and customer loyalty of eateries in Asaba.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Foundation

Theoretically, this study is built on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

Davies (1989) developed the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which provides a clear explanation of the user's intention to accept new technologies. The user may be an individual or an organization (Subhadin, 2017). "Perceived usefulness" and "perceived ease of use" are the two main factors in the original TAM (Davis, 1989, referenced in Wilson, 2016). Wilson (2016) posits that there exists a relationship between these two variables and users' attitudes toward new technologies, as well as their final acceptance or rejection.

Perceived usefulness was defined by Davis (1989) as "the extent to which an individual believes that utilizing a specific system would improve his or her job performance." Stated differently, the extent to which a company feels that implementing a specific system will improve the company's performance. According to Davis, the adoption of a particular system is seen to be positively influenced by a system that has a high perceived usefulness. Perceived ease of use was described as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" by Davis (1989), as referenced in Wilson (2020). From an organizational standpoint, this can also be described as the extent to which an organization thinks that utilizing a specific system would require no work at all.

Application of the Technology Adoption Model

Numerous business organizations have adopted mobile marketing due to its perceived ease of use and usefulness, which enables them to retain current customers, attract new ones, and improve customer loyalty through enhanced interaction and communication (Hady, 2013; Didia & Otite, 2017). It will be essential for business owners, investors, and companies looking to outsell rivals in their industry, attract potential customers, and climb the loyalty ladder to adopt cutting-edge marketing techniques that provide a plethora of chances to engage users or potential customers more personally.

Scholars are being motivated to theorize about mobile marketing strategy to broaden our understanding of the relationship between mobile marketing and other variables due to the trend of mobile marketing adoption among business organizations such as banks and retail stores (Raymond 2011; Hady, 2013; Preetham, 2015; Idenedo et al., 2020). Although the bulk of research establishing connections between mobile marketing and other constructs is based on TAM from the viewpoint of the customer and uses dimensions such as attitude, perceived utility, trust, permission, perceived ease of use, perceived entertainment, and personal attachment (Nazari, et al., 2018; Abdul et al., 2019; Amer et al., 2016). This study has established that, from an organizational standpoint, eateries in Asaba can improve customer loyalty by adopting mobile marketing considering the perceived ease of use and usefulness.

Conceptual Review**Concept of Mobile Marketing**

According to Okazaki (2012), as cited in Idenedo et al. (2020), mobile marketing began in the late 1990s with the sending of short messages via short message service (SMS). However, as smartphones became more commonplace and ran on different mobile operating systems, like Apple iOS, Google, and Android, the strategies changed. As a result, in addition to providing their customers with educational and entertainment services, numerous mobile network operators now provide a wide variety of mobile applications and transaction/payment services (Amirkhanpour et al., 2014). Through mobile devices, mobile apps, and mobile web browsing technologies, businesses can use mobile marketing to provide online customers with pertinent information about their offerings on a personalized and interactive basis (Hopkins & Turner, 2012; Amirkhanpour et al., 2014; Idenedo et al., 2020).

The definition of mobile marketing varies amongst academics. Scharl et al. (2005) defined it as "the use of a wireless means to provide consumers personalized information in real-time, sensitive to geographical location, which seeks to promote a good, service, or idea, bringing benefits to all stakeholders." Still others disagree. According to MMA (2009), it's a collection of procedures that let businesses interact and interact with their audience on any mobile device or network in a meaningful and interactive way. Mobile marketing is defined by Shankar and Balasubramanian (2009) as "communication and promotion of double or multiple pathways between a company and its customers using a medium, device, or mobile technology". According to the different definitions, the rise of smartphones and mobile apps is what drives mobile marketing, and this has given businesses the chance to continue engaging in meaningful and interactive communication with their target audience to draw in new business, keep their current clientele, and climb the loyalty ladder (Robayo, et al., 2017 Didia & Otite, 2017). To stay competitive, Robayo et al. (2017) claim that the increasing use of smartphones and the widespread appeal of mobile applications have forced businesses to seek rapid ways to produce these tools and integrate them into their digital marketing strategies.

Concept Customer Loyalty

Improving customer loyalty has become a crucial area of focus for any organization, as it has been rated by scholars (Khan, 2013; Maduka et al., 2020; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022; Idenedo & Ebenuwa, 2022; Idenedo & Wali, 2022; Idenedo et al., 2023) as the most valuable outcome of marketing efforts. If a corporation can gain a client's trust by the quality of its service and product offerings, then both the customer and the organization will benefit from the connection (Khan, 2013). Consumers compare their subjective perceptions after purchasing with their expectations before making the purchase, so winning a customer's loyalty is not a random act; rather, it is the result of meeting their expectations, according to research (AchieveGlobal, 2008; Kotler & Keller, 2009; Khan, 2013; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022). According to Kotler and Keller (2009), if satisfaction surpasses expectations (consumer enthusiasm), then this comparison results in a scenario of satisfaction. The relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty is not entirely comparable, though, as customers' assessments of satisfaction with the quality of the services or goods they get vary (Kotler & Keller, 2009). This suggests that there are various reasons why customers might be satisfied.

According to Bruhn (2001), customer loyalty is a component of a cause-and-effect chain that includes operations ranging from the first point of interaction with the customer to the organization's financial success. Bruhn (2001) states that the stages start with the customer's initial interaction with the product or service through purchase, compare pre-existing expectations with the product or service, and gauge the degree of satisfaction. Customer loyalty will be activated if the customer's evaluation is positive or if the customer's expectations have been fulfilled. This will increase the customer's faith in the company's products and willingness to use the same product or service going

forward. The aforementioned steps culminate in loyalty when the customer's buy conviction leads to recurrent purchases and recommendations of the good or service to other prospective clients. They additionally come to an end when the enterprise's financial success is achieved (Bruhn, 2001). Similar to Idenedo and Goodie-Okio (2022), Daffy (2009) described loyalty as a commitment—both physical and emotional—made by customers in return for satisfying their needs. The emotion referred to in Daffy's (2009) definition of loyalty was defined by Budică and Barbu (2010) as the favorable or unfavorable emotions evoked by a thing or concept. Consumer loyalty refers to a consumer's inclination to favor a particular brand and its products above those of its rivals for psychological, financial, or social reasons, as well as because they like utilizing the brand's offerings (Didia & Idenedo, 2017; Idenedo & Goodie-Okio, 2022; Maduka et al., 2020). Consumers who are loyal to their brands shop more regularly and consistently, which frequently results in higher volume or higher value purchases (Oghenenyerhovwo et al., 2016; Sima & Elham, 2015).

To explain loyalty, Daffy (2009) developed the formula $Loyalty = Satisfaction + Affinity + Involvement$. Daffy (2009) went on to say that a company must ensure that its goods and services both meet and beyond the expectations of its customers to win their loyalty. While affinity happens when there is both satisfaction and engagement, Daffy defines involvement as a relationship between the company and the customer that will improve their decision quality based on feedback from customers. According to Kotler and Keller (2009), Daffy's loyalty equation was based on the idea that if all resources and procedures are directed toward meeting the needs and expectations of the customer, then loyalty levels will rise. Additionally, involving customers in the process of understanding their needs and co-creating value will make them feel valued.

Measures of Customer Loyalty

Resistance to Switching: Customers' attitudinal manifestation of loyalty to a company's brand or services is regarded as resistance to switching (Butcher et al., 2001; Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Generally speaking, when consumers perceive that a service does not live up to their expectations in terms of quality, availability, and cost, they will typically go to another similar brand or service (Sirius, 2009). Additionally, alluring promotional offers from other brands, including eye-catching presents or price breaks, could persuade consumers to try a different brand (Shahpar, 2014). On the other hand, Reichheld (1996), referenced in Rahim et al. (2012), suggests that dissatisfied consumers might decide against switching if the switching cost is substantial or they do not anticipate receiving better service elsewhere, while satisfied customers might look for competitors if they think they might receive better service elsewhere. This suggests that satisfaction with the services received compared to expectations was not the only factor that led to resistance to switching behavior.

In light of this, some marketing scholars (Rahim et al., 2012; Lopez et al., 2008) believed that customers' resistance to switching was a function of the decision to switch, taking into account the customer's relative assessment of other factors, the cost of the decision, and the customer's perception of the benefits of any such decision. According to Nicolas et al. (2018), search effort and money costs are included in the switching costs. These switching costs function as obstacles to switching, making it costly and challenging for customers to move service providers (Nicolas et al., 2018; Idenedo et al., 2023). Market disruptions and specific events may cause customers to switch between similar products or services. According to Son et al. (2010), market disruptions are significant occurrences that jeopardize consumers' brand loyalty or relationships. According to Son et al. (2010), the events include disruptive innovations by competitors that can affect the relative standing of brands in the eyes of customers, industry crises, aggressive competitors' sales promotion, product recalls, negative publicity, and service failures at individual firms. Thus, a customer's refusal to move, even in the face of market disruptions and inventions, is a sign of their loyalty to a business's brand or brand of products.

Repeat Patronage: Repeat patronage according to Butcher et al. (2001) is a behavioral way for consumers to show their loyalty to a brand or service by continually using it over competitors. As asserted by Idenedo et al. (2023), this behavior occurs when customers are consistently satisfied—psychologically, economically, socially, emotionally, physically, and intellectually—with the brand or service they have used.

According to Nwadike et al. (2020), repeat patronage is the practice of customers regularly using a specific company's goods and services without taking into account those provided by other businesses. This is consistent with Panda's (2013) claim that customers who engage in recurrent patronage would regularly buy their requirements met by a specific business, even when multiple businesses are offering the same services. Curtis et al. (2011) provided a similar definition of repeat patronage as a consumer's actual conduct that leads to the purchase of the same good or service more than once. Nwulu and Asiegbu (2015) as in Idenedo and Ebenuwa (2022) examined customer loyalty to a brand by looking at repeated purchases. They recommend that service providers take certain steps to ensure repeat patronage of their services by listening to customer comments, suggestions, and feedback about the services they are offering and providing value-adding services to the customer experience. Based on their analysis, a higher repeat patronage value means a well-retained and satisfied customer.

Operational Conceptual Framework

This study is built on the assumptions operationalized below

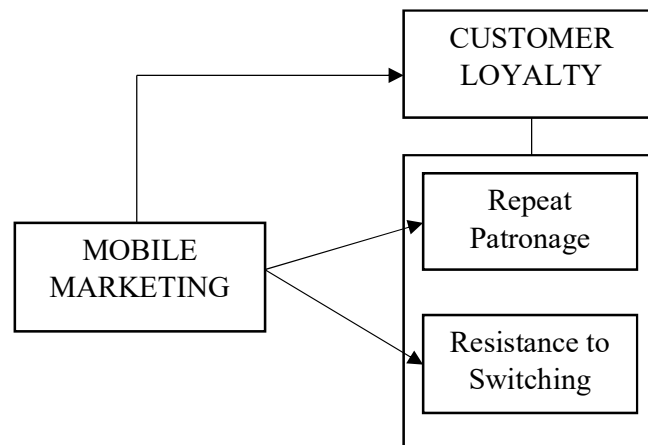


Figure 1: Operational Conceptual Frame of Mobile Marketing and Customer Loyalty

Source: Study's Measures Adapted from Idenedo and Wali (2022) on internal marketing practices and customer loyalty of healthcare firms in South-South, Nigeria.

Mobile Marketing and Customer Loyalty

Idenedo et al. (2020) studied the interplay between mobile marketing and eateries' performance in Port Harcourt. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design was adopted while the Spearman rank correlation coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. The study revealed that mobile marketing (mobile payment and mobile advertisement) substantially and positively relates to eateries' performance.

Saeed and Bekhed (2018) examined the influential factors of mobile marketing among young Malaysian customers. The findings revealed that perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived entertainment, and personal attachment significantly influenced young customers' attitudes toward mobile marketing.

Nazari, et al., (2018) examined the attitude of mobile users toward mobile marketing in a case study of a fast food restaurant at Bukit Bintang. The finding shows there is a favorable attitude toward mobile marketing in the customer population, gauging the actual use of mobile marketing in fast food restaurants. The perceptions influencing the attitude are Perceived Usefulness (PU), Perceived Ease of Use (PEU), and Mobile Phone Self-Efficacy (MSE). The underlying motives influencing the use of mobile marketing in fast food restaurants are Speed, Functionality, Customer Friendly, and Hospitality. Ranges of promotional tools in mobile phones have a significant relationship with attitude and are effective in achieving marketing goals such as increasing sales and market growth for fast food restaurants. Premised on the review, the following hypotheses are proposed.

Hadadi and Almsafir (2017) investigated the relationship between mobile marketing and CRM. The result shows that teenagers are more influenced by mobile banner ads and mobile applications followed by other types of mobile marketing. Mobile applications have a wealthier mobile capability than mobile web. Deep association of mobile apps is a great occasion for each industry to improve the loyalty of their customers. The research proposed some important inferences that will support marketers in producing better mobile marketing and enhancing mobile customer relationship management services. Also, the research found that there would be a brighter future for mobile advertising rather than any other type of advertising.

Amer et al. (2016) empirically tested the relationship between mobile marketing acceptance and adoption in the Jordanian market. The results showed that perceived ease of use, social norms, content, and customization have a negative and significant effect on mobile marketing acceptance. Meanwhile, perceived usefulness, entertainment, and credibility have a positive and significant effect on mobile marketing acceptance. Also, privacy has a non-significant effect on mobile marketing acceptance but its effect is positive. Further, mobile marketing acceptance has no mediation effect on the relationship between factors affecting mobile marketing acceptance and mobile marketing adoption. Mobile marketing acceptance has a non-significant positive effect on mobile marketing adoption.

Muslim et al. (2014) investigated the impact of perceived usefulness (PU), perceived ease of use (PEOU), and trust on mobile website satisfaction. The results show that there is a positive relationship between PEOU, PU, and mobile users' satisfaction. PU is positively related to trust and mobile users' satisfaction. Moreover, trust positively influences mobile users' satisfaction.

Lesley (2012) studied mobile marketing; a tool for building customer loyalty. The objective was to explore mobile marketing and how it can improve customer loyalty. It was found that mobile marketing creates a big opportunity for companies to create awareness of their products and services while building a base of loyal customers. Also, mobile marketing tools increase customer loyalty to companies and increase their intention to buy. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between mobile marketing and customer loyalty.

Based on the empirical literature reviewed in line with the operational conceptual framework, the current study hypothesized that:

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between mobile marketing and customer resistance to switching

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between mobile marketing and customer repeat patronage

METHODOLOGY

Because the researchers do not have total control over the research elements, this study uses a cross-sectional survey research design in an uncontrived setting. The study population consists of ten thousand (10,000) estimated customers of the registered eateries listed in the Delta State Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Asaba, as well as those registered with the Association of Fast Food and Confectionary of Nigeria (AFCON) Delta State Chapter. Given that the study population is a flow population, Godden (2004) argued that population estimation is the best approach to use to arrive at a finite population of study. Additionally, 370 diners from the restaurants make up the

study's sample size, which was established using the Krejice and Morgan (1970) table for calculating sample size for a finite population. Three hundred and thirty-two (303) retrieved copies of a structured questionnaire were used to collect primary data; these copies were qualified, cleaned, and employed in the study.

While the research instrument adopted the Likert scale method in the measurement of mobile marketing constructs and customer loyalty, which ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, the measures of central tendencies and dispersions were used to analyze the respondent's demographics, and the face validity of the research instrument was ensured by colleagues and other experts in the field of measurement and evaluation. In a similar vein, reliability was guaranteed by pre-testing the questionnaire on fifty students who are patrons of one or two of the eateries. The researcher also employed Cronbach's Alpha technique to ensure the reliability and internal consistency of the measuring instrument. These experts evaluated each item's relevance to the study's specific objectives, the hypotheses to be tested, and how adequate the items are regarding measuring the constructs they are designed to measure. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient with the assistance of SPSS version 22.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

As earlier stated, the different hypotheses proposed for this study were subjected to statistical tests using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Co-Efficient Statistical Tool.

Table 1: Description of the Degree of Association between Variables

Correlation Coefficient (r)	Description/Interpretation
± 0.80 – 1.0	Very Strong
± 0.60 – 0.79	Strong
± 0.40 – 0.59	Moderate
± 0.20 – 0.39	Weak
± 0.00 – 0.19	Very Weak

Source: SPSS Output of Data Analysis on Mobile Marketing and Customers Loyalty (2024).

The positive (+) sign in the r value indicates a direct/positive relationship while the negative (-) sign in r indicates an indirect/negative or inverse relationship. Therefore, the sign of the r value explains the direction of association or nature of the relationship between the variables.

Decision Rule

Reject the null hypothesis (H₀) if PV < 0.05 for a 2-tailed test and conclude that a significant relationship exists.

Table 1: Correlation Analysis of Mobile Marketing and Repeat Patronage Correlations

			Mobile Marketing	Repeat Patronage
Spearman's rho	Mobile Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.718**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	303	303
Repeat Patronage	Mobile Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	.718**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	303	303

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

Source: SPSS Output of Data Analyses on the Relationship between Mobile Marketing and Customer Loyalty (2024)

Table 1 explains that Spearman's correlation coefficient (r) = 0.718**, the value is high, implying that a strong relationship exists between mobile marketing and repeat patronage. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient indicates the relationship between the variables is positive. That is to

say that the increase in repeat patronage is associated with mobile marketing. The probability value (0.000) < (0.05) level of significance the researcher therefore rejected H_{01} and concluded that there is a significant relationship between mobile marketing and repeat patronage

Table 2: Correlation Analysis of Mobile Marketing and Resistance to Switching Correlations

		Mobile Marketing	Resistance to Switching
Spearman's rho	Mobile Marketing	1.000	.712**
	Correlation Coefficient	.	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	303	303
Resistance to Switching	Mobile Marketing	.712**	1.000
	Correlation Coefficient	.000	.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	303	303

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

Source: SPSS Output of Data Analyses on the Relationship between Mobile Marketing and Customer Loyalty (2024)

Table 2 shows that Spearman's correlation coefficient ($r = 0.712^{**}$), this value is high, implying that a strong relationship exists between mobile marketing and resistance to switching. The positive sign of the correlation coefficient connotes that the relationship is positive. This signifies an increase in customer resistance to switching is associated with the adoption of mobile marketing by the studied eateries. The probability value (0.000) < (0.05) level of significance the researcher therefore rejected H_{02} and concluded that there is a significant relationship between mobile marketing and customer resistance to switching.

DISCUSSION

The collected data were analyzed and hypotheses were tested to determine the relationship between the different variables of the study. The study observed that mobile marketing has a positive and statistically significant relationship with customer loyalty expressed through resistance to switching and repeat patronage. The findings of the study were validated by extant literature. The findings align with Lesley's (2012) study on mobile marketing; a tool for building customer loyalty. The study found that mobile marketing creates a big opportunity for companies to create awareness of their products and services while building a base of loyal customers. Also, mobile marketing tools increase customer loyalty to companies and increase their intention to buy. This study's findings are also in harmony with Saeed and Bekhed (2018) who examined the influential factors of mobile marketing among young Malaysian customers. The study found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, entertainment, and personal attachment significantly influenced young customers' attitudes toward mobile marketing. Besides, the mentioned studies, the current findings are coherent with the result of Idenedo et al. (2020) study on the interplay between mobile marketing and eateries' performance in Port Harcourt. The study revealed that mobile marketing (mobile payment and mobile advertisement) substantially and positively relates to eateries' performance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between mobile marketing and customer loyalty. Based on current research and studies in mobile marketing and customer loyalty, here are some evidence-based recommendations to be considered that can contribute to customer loyalty.

- I. Eateries in Asaba should adopt mobile marketing in marketing considering its ease of use and usefulness.
- II. Eateries in Asaba should be innovative in line with the contemporary business environment and consumer tastes and preferences.
- III. Eateries in Asaba should ensure website and email campaigns are designed with mobile users in mind and the site's usability should be tested regularly.
- IV. Eateries should leverage customer data to deliver personalized content and offers that include the use of behavioral data to tailor messages and product recommendations.
- V. Eateries in Asaba Delta State should integrate mobile marketing efforts with other channels for a cohesive customer journey by creating a consistent experience across mobile, web, and in-store.
- VI. Eateries should develop a high-quality app that suits their business, focus on user experience, and offer features that add value beyond their website.

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