# Sales Promotional Techniques and Consumer Patronage of GSM Communication Services in Delta State

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#### Abstract

In this competitive business environment, organizations like telecommunication companies need to constantly stimulate sales through adoption of well-blended sales promotion strategies. This study is carried out to investigate the relationship between sales promotional techniques and consumer patronage of GSM Communication Services in Delta State of Nigeria. The study anchored on the theory of planned behaviour, adopted descriptive research design using a survey method. The population of the study comprises of consumers of GSM communication services in Delta State. The study used a structured questionnaire as instrument for data collection. Findings of the study indicate that free sample, price discount, and bonus offer are all positively and significantly related to consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State. The research work concluded that there is a strong, significant and positive relationship between sale promotional techniques and consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State of Nigeria, and recommends amongst others that GSM communication service providers should sustain on giving price discount to GSM users so as to entice them and also increase consumer patronage of GSM services.

**Keywords:** Consumer patronage, sales promotion, free sample, price discount, bonus offer

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Due to advances in technology, infrastructure, and global access to information, the business environment has become highly competitive in the twenty-first century. As a result of the low switching cost in the market, the environment has become extremely complicated, and consumer tastes are constantly shifting. Based on the high demand by consumers in the marketplace,

corporate organizations are being compelled to raise their resources, with a greater emphasis on attracting as well as maintaining customers (Benumolo, 2021).

Arguably, the ever-increasing competition in the global market has compelled businesses to be more customer-driven than their competitors in ensuring that consumer demands and wants are met more efficiently and effectively. Belch and Belch, (2018) noted that sales promotion is a direct enticement that provides an additional value or incentive for the product, to the sales force, distributors, or final consumers, with the primary goal of spawning instant sales. Consumers are enlightened and enticed about an existing or new product through sales promotion.

In this era of global competition, firms use various dimensions of promotional strategies to influence consumers' behaviour and increase sales. The world is fast becoming a global village and the necessary tool for this process is communication, of which telecommunication is a key player (Hudson, 2022). Telecommunication is concerned with the roles of information technologies in the society that moves the economy forward. In line with this, Hobday (2014) opined that as social and economic activities become more and more dependent on information technology (IT), telecom companies are crucially expanding technological trend to capture shares in a rapidly growing (IT) market. In this competitive business environment, organizations like telecommunication companies need to constantly stimulate sales through adoption of well-blended sales promotion strategy (Chevron, 2018); as promotion is an integrated and comprehensive term, and covers the entire gamut of advertising, publicity, public relations, personal selling and sales promotion.

In the present competitive world, if any business organization has to survive, it needs to adopt sales promotional strategies. Sales promotion is the direct way an organization attempts to reach its publics and is performed through the five elements of promotion mix, including advertising, sales promotion; personal selling, public relations, and direct marketing, which when properly applied, can lead to remarkable market performance, in terms of sales turnover, market-share, market-growth and profitability, and other marketing objectives (Czinkota & Ronkainen, 2014). However, to achieve this, firms must operate within the boundaries of core competences of its promotional strategies and other business strategies and within an understanding of the firm's environment which can change over time (Prahad & Hamel, 2019). Michael and Ogwo (2023), stated that competent and well-articulated sales promotion strategies constitute a competitive advantage to telecommunication companies, in particular and firms in general. This is hinged on the premise that firms which have built up knowledge and expertise in different promotion strategies, are likely to adapt to the dynamics of the marketing environment and exhibit superior market performance.

However, many a time, most organizations do not achieve the level of market performance that will yield revenues for them, hence, some organizations experience sub-optimal or even out-right poor market performance. This study therefore, tends to evaluate the role of different promotional tools on customer patronage of Telecommunication firms. Prior to the advent of mobile phone, telecommunication industry was a monopolistic industry, providing services to its subscribers through fixed-line even though their services were below expectations, due to its unavailability and poor interconnectivity and service provisioning. At that time, the fixed-line could not be carried around because of its nature. Also, the high cost made it affordable only to the elite class. In the same vein, the mass media then, were mostly owned and controlled by the government.

Several researchers have identified key promotional techniques, such as free samples, price discounts, bonus offers, sweepstakes, and free gifts, that have shown a positive and significant relationship with consumer patronage of GSM communication services (Alvarez, 2015; Imaya & Padhmanaban, 2015; Kehinde, 2014). For example, Oyeniyi (2017) and Egwuonwu et al. (2017) support the notion that these techniques, particularly free samples, can drive consumer decisions and boost patronage. These findings underscore the importance of offering incentives to attract and retain customers in a competitive market. The motivation for this study stems from the multiplicity of findings on the link between promotional techniques and consumer patronage as well as the fact that prior research in the context of Delta State is rare hence this study seeks to fill this gap.

## **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between sales promotional techniques and consumer patronage of GSM Communication Services in Delta State of Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to:

- 1. ascertain the relationship between free sample and consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State, Nigeria.
- 2. determine the relationship between price discount and consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State, Nigeria.
- 3. Investigate the relationship between bonus offer and consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State, Nigeria.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows: Section two focuses on the literature review. Section three addresses the methodology with emphasis on theoretical framework and model specification. Section four presents the estimation result and discussion of findings. Section five concludes.

#### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Sales promotion

Sales promotional efforts are directed at final consumers and designed to motivate, persuade and remind them of the products are offered (Amponsah, 2018). Kotler et al. (2023) defined sales promotion as all the short term incentives, that include, tools for consumer promotion (sample, coupons, cash refund offer, free sample, premiums, prize, free trials, warranties, cross promotion point-of-purchase display); trade promotion (free sample, advertising and allowances) and salesforce promotion (trade show and conventions, contests for sales reps, and specialty advertising). Furthermore, Kotler et al. (2023) added that sales promotion includes a various collection of incentive tools, mostly short-term, designed to stimulate quicker and/or further purchase of a product by consumers or the trade (Dionho, 2023). The direct inducement or incentive to the agents, or the consumer, is sales promotion, with the primary objective of creating an immediate sale. Sales promotion is unique in that, it offers an additional incentive for purchase action (Adrian Palmer, 2014). Sales promotion refers to the promotion activities that stimulate interest, trial or purchase by final customers or others in the channel (Pembi, 2017). Chitraleka (2020) stated that sales promotion is marketing activities, aside from personal selling, advertising, publicity and stimulate consumer purchasing and dealer effectiveness, such as shows, display and exhibitions, demonstrations and various non-recurrent selling efforts not within the original routine.

#### **Consumer Patronage**

The customer is as old as business. The sole purpose of every business is to "create customer". According to Ogwo and Igwe (2022), the only economic and social justification of any business existence is to create customer satisfaction. The importance of the customer and customer patronage is so germane. It includes financial and non-financial dimensions. Various studies have been carried out on what influence or impacts on level of customer patronage. They include firm's capacity, product or services attributes, economic situation, political forces, social and psychological factors, situational, competition, marketing mix programs (Ogwo & Igwe, 2022; Kotler & Killer 2016). Intention to use is defined as a specific desire to continue relationship with a service provider (Czepiel & Culmore, 2017). Attitudinal measures have an advantage over behavioural measures (actual or repeat patronage) in that they can provide greater understanding off the factors associated with the development and modification of patronage. (Fishbin and Ajzen (1975) argue that attitudes are functionally related to behavioural intentions, which predict behaviour. Importantly, a person's intention to behave in a certain way is contingent upon the attitude toward performing the behaviour in question and the social pressure on him/her to behave in that way (subjective norm). This suggests that attitudes and subjective norms differ according to the person involved and behavioural context. Consumers vary in their commitment to attitude; the degree of commitment relates to their level of involvement with the attitude object. This commitment ranges from inertia to a strong emotional passion. Commitment might be based on customer's intentions as want, expectation, plans for the future (Ogwo & Igwe, 2022)

#### **Theoretical Framework**

This research is anchored on the theory of planned behaviour. The theory of planned behaviour was first developed by Ajzen (1991) as an extension to reason action theory (RAT) by Ajzen and Fishbien. The theory came into being in other to plan and predict the behaviour of an individual. TPB is considered as one of the major theories used in the study of intention (Fini et al., 2009). It posits that understanding the behaviour of an individual can be done through the identifying some key determinants; they are attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control. The antecedence mentioned above highlight the desirability executing the behaviour, while the last one explains how an individual can control the behaviour (Krueger et al., 2020). In other words, the higher the attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control of an individual, the higher the possibility of becoming an entrepreneur. It is believed that the more the understanding of the antecedents of the intention the more possible for us to predict behaviour and attitude.

Similarly, Krueger et al. (2020) also argued that TPB is considered as one of the leading theory in terms of robust and validity. Several studies have used the theory of planned behaviour which is considered of great important in determining buying behaviour; examples are (Krueger & Carsrud, 1993; Souitaris et al., 2017). For instance, examining the Douglas and Shepherd, (2002) using the theory of planned behaviour reports that attitude, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control of an individual are very essential key in determining the buying intention of an individual.

Based on the above theoretical framework and the hypotheses, the following conceptual model is proposed:

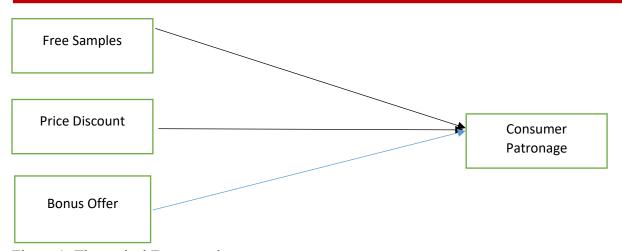


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework

Source: Author (2025)

The above framework conceptualizes graphically the interaction between variables studied in this work. The study adopts three measures of free samples, price discounts, and bonus offer as independent variables. Consumer patronage is used as dependent variable for the study.

### **Empirical Review**

A number of prior studies has delved into the relationship between promotional techniques and consumer patronage with diverse results. For example, Olubusola et al. (2022) investigated the effect of sales promotion on customer patronage of household appliances in Lagos State. The methodology used was based on a descriptive research design. Questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The sample size was determined using simple random sampling technique. The sample size was One hundred and twenty-four (124) respondents, which was further analyzed using multiple-regression analysis. The findings revealed that there is a positive significant effect of sales promotion in terms of discounts and demonstration used in marketing and sales of household appliances to drive customer patronage. The study however found that the use of premium as a customer sales promotion to influence customer patronage of household appliances was insignificant.

Also, Okoye (2021) examined the effect of sales promotion on the marketing of Coca-cola drinks in Anambra State. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. This study is carried out in Onitsha Anambra State. The researcher made use of primary sources. The population of the study comprises all the customers in Onitsha. The population is unknown (infinite). The sample size is 368 obtain by using Topman's non-parametric sample size determination formula. The study used test-retest and Cronbach Alpha method in order to affirm the reliability of the research instruments. The data for this study were collected by means of questionnaire and persona; interview. Frequency tables and percentage analysis were used to present quantitative data in form of tables. The study also employed Multiple Regression Analysis. The results show that personal selling has significant effect on marketing of Coca-Cola drink in Anambra State. Rebates have significant effect on marketing of Coca-Cola drink in Anambra State. Trade discounts have significant effect on marketing of Coca-Cola drink in Anambra State. The study concludes that sales promotion has significant positive effect on the marketing of Coca-Cola drink in Anambra State. Orji et al. (2020) examine the effects of sales promotion on the

consumer buying behaviour of food seasoning among Nigerian households using Nestle Nigeria Plc Maggi NAIJA POT brand as a case study. The study employed cross sectional research design and the population consists of consumers of Nestle product (Maggi seasoning) in Bwari Area Council, Abuja. The sample size is 246 determined using Topman's formula. Primary data was used through administration of questionnaire and regression analysis was used to test the relationship between the study variables. The findings revealed that most of the consumers enjoy the rebates which influence their decision before, during and after the purchase; there is a positive effect of free trial and free gift on consumer buying behaviour of Maggi NAIJAPOT in Bwari Area Council, Abuja. The study concluded that that sales promotion through rebates, free trial and free gifts is one significant tool marketing companies should give attention to in order to influence their consumers buying behaviour.

In another study, Awoniyi et al. (2021) was to see how effective consumer sales promotions (discounts, rebates, premiums, and demonstrations) are at increasing over-the-counter (OTC) drug usage. A descriptive study design with multistage sampling procedures was employed as the methodology. A total of 400 people were included in the sample, which was then examined using regression analysis. The findings demonstrated that consumer sales promotion, such as premiums, discounts, and rebates, utilized in the marketing and sales of pharmaceutical items, had a substantial effect on driving customer patronage as a consumer sales reaction. Consumers' sales responses to demonstrations as a consumer sales promotion, on the other hand, were shown to be inconsequential in the study. Shodiya et al. (2021) investigated the effect of sales promotion on customers' patronage in Rites Foods Plc in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun State. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The population of the study covers the entire customers of Rites Foods Plc in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State which is estimated at 18000. Yaro Yamane sample size determination was used to select 392 respondents from the total population at 95% confidence level. The study utilized primary and source of data collection. The study utilized 5-point Linkert scale measurement and structured self-administered questionnaire. The finding of the study revealed that significant positive relationship exists between monetary sales promotion techniques (MSPT) and customers' patronage of Rite Foods Plc in Ijebu Ode, Ogun State. The study further concluded monetary sales promotion technique enhances customer's patronage in Rite Foods Plc.

Piefer and Pillary (2014) investigated the effectiveness of world wrestling entertainment marketing strategies. The study was designed to investigate the numerous ways in which the company promotes and markets its brands its programming, its events and its products. The study adopted survey design and randomly selected 107 respondents as the sample size. The study results revealed a variety of significant differences in the effects of WUSE marketing promotions on the age income, marital status, and ethnicity demographics. Ibrahim (2020) investigated how consumer sales promotion affected customers' shopping habits in Tema, Ghana's retail market for consumer goods. The study demonstrated a substantial association between consumer sales promotion and consumers' purchasing behavior using data from a sample of 220 respondents in Tema, Ghana. The sorts of consumer sales promotion techniques used by shops selling consumer goods in Tema, Ghana were further found to rank price discounts first, extra packs (buy one, get one free) second, coupons third, free samples fourth, and contests and sweepstakes fifth. This study was conducted outside Nigeria and focused on retail market for consumer goods. The present study was conducted in Nigeria and focused on the telecommunication sector.

Antwi and Gideon (2019) conducted a research on how promotional packages affected customer switching and retention in the Ghanaian telecommunications sector. Results from surveys completed by 150 customers of Mobile Telecommunication Service (hence, referred to as MTN) and Vodafone Ghana Ltd. revealed that promotional packages have a positive and significant impact on customer switch, customer retention, and customer satisfaction. Promotional packages are the primary drivers of customer retention because it has also been found that businesses without efficient promotional packages lose customers.

Akintan et al. (2018) studied the connection between customer buying intentions and sales promotion techniques such price cuts, bonus packs, free airtime, competitions, and refund offers. The survey research design was used, and the instrument for gathering data was a questionnaire. In Abeokuta, Ogun State, 150 MTN subscribers were chosen using a practical sample technique. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to examine the data, and Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were employed to assess the hypotheses. The results of correlation showed that there is a small but favorable association between consumer purchasing motivations and price reduction, bonus packs, free airtime, and refund offers. Ezenyilimba et al. (2019) examined the influence of sales promotion on customer patronage of alcoholic beverages. The study's major goal was to investigate the impact of sales promotions on customer loyalty. The study was conducted using a survey research design. A total of 115 people took part in the study. The data was analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis. Both dependent and independent variables (pricing, pack, contest, and coupons) had a considerable impact on customer patronage, according to the data. According to the findings, sales promotions have a considerable impact on client consumption of alcoholic beverages.

#### 3. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design using a survey method. It also used a correlational research design to investigate the relationships as well as the extent of the relationships between the dependent and independent variables of this study. Descriptive research design is used in this study because it allows the collection of data from a sizable population so as to get the opinions of the respondents in order to generate the information needed for the study. The population of the study comprises of consumers of GSM communication services (MTN, AIRTEL and GLOBACOM) in Asaba, Warri and Uvwie areas of Delta State.

Topman's formula for determination of sample size was used due to unknown population size. The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2pq}{e^2}$$

Where

n = Sample size; z = the value of Z-score associated of 95% confidence level = 1.96

p = probability of positive response (users of GSM communication service under survey); q

= probability of negative response (non-users of GSM communication service under survey)

e = error term (5% SL)

Prior to the main survey, a pilot study was conducted to determine the proportion of P (users) and Q (non-users of GSM communication services) in Asaba, Warri and Uvwie towns. Based on the pilot study, the proportion of P is 0.533 while the Proportion of Q is 0.467. Applying the formula:  $n = Z^2(PQ)/e^2$  a sample size of 382 was obtained.

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Demography of the Respondents** 

**Table 1 Characteristics of the Respondents (Demography)** 

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	-	
Male	145	41.4
Female	205	58.6
Total	350	100
Marital Status		
Single	193	55.1
Married	119	34.0
Divorced/Separated	6	1.7
Widow/widower	4	1.1
Total	350	100
<b>Education Qualification</b>		
FSLC	5	1.4
SSCE/WAEC/NECO/NABTEB	43	12.3
Degree/HND/OND/NCE	208	59.4
Post Degree	70	20.0
Others	24	6.9
Total	350	100
Age Range		
18yrs-29yrs	123	35.1
30yrs-40yrs	105	30.0
41yrs-50yrs	64	18.3
Above 50yrs	58	16.6
Total	350	100
Occupation		
Civil/Public Servant	66	18.6
Business	143	40.9
Self employed	34	9.7
Student	82	23.4
Other	25	7.1
Total	350	100

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the respondents based on usable and valid copies of the questionnaire returned for analysis. The table shows that one hundred and forty-five (145) of the respondents which represent 41.4% are male, while two hundred and five (205) respondents which represent 58.6% are female. Concerning the marital status, out of the three hundred and fifty respondents, one hundred and ninety-three are single (55.1%); one hundred and nineteen respondents which represent (34%) are married. 6 respondents are divorced or separated while 4 respondents are widow/widower.

Concerning the highest education qualification level, 208 representing (59.4%) of the respondents had Degree or HND or OND or NCE as the highest education qualification level. 70 representing (20%) of the respondents had post degree qualifications while 24 representing (6.9%) had other qualifications. The table also shows that 123 (35.1%) of the respondents are

within the age bracket of 18-29years; 105 (30%) of the respondents are within the age bracket of 30-40 years; 64 (18.3%) of the respondents are within the age range of 41-50years while 58 (16.6%) of the respondents are above 50years. Concerning the occupation of the respondents, 66 representing (18.6%) are civil or public servants; 143 representing (40.9%) of the respondents are doing business; 34 representing (9.7%) of the respondents are self employed. 82 representing (23.4%) are students while 25 of the respondents representing (7.1%) engaged in other occupation not specified.

# **Results and Discussion of Findings**

Results of the hypotheses form the basis of the discussion as presented below:

# Free sample and Consumer Patronage

Table 2: Result of Pearson product-moment correlation between free sample and consumer patronage of GSM communication service.

		Consumer Patronage	Free sample
Consumer Patronage	Pearson Correlation	n 1	.847**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Free sample	Pearson Correlation	n .847 **	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350
**. Correlation is signif	icant at the 0.05 level	(2-tailed).	

### Source: SPSS Computation Output, 2025.

The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values reveal a strong positive significant correlation between free sample and consumer patronage (r=0.847, p-value = 0.000) which is < 0.05). This result is in line with the findings of (Son & Kijboonchoo, 2018; Soegeng & Wahyoedi, 2021; Chao & Liao, 2016; Prayogi & Santosa, 2019). The report indicated that there is a relationship between free samples and consumer patronage of a product. Therefore, free samples are one of the sales promotional techniques that positively and significantly affect consumer patronage of GSM communication services. Furthermore, this result is supported by Fill (2022) and Raghubir and Corfman (2019), who ascertained that free samples have a significant relationship with consumer patronage.

# **Price discount and Consumer Patronage**

Table 2: Result of Pearson product-moment correlation analysis between price discount and consumer patronage of GSM communication service.

		Consumer patronage	Price discount
<b>Consumer Patronage</b>	Pearson	1	.813**
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	350	350
Price discount	Pearson	.813 **	1
	Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	350	350
**. Correlation is signification	cant at the 0.05 leve	l (2-tailed).	

Source: SPSS Computation Output, 2025.

The Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values revealed a strong positive and significant correlation between price and consumer patronage with correlation coefficient values of (r = 0.813, p < 0.05). This outcome tallies with the results of (Blair & London 2022, Inman, Winer & Ferraro, 2019, Kardes, 2019) that reported that price discount has positive relationship towards consumer patronage. Accordingly, the major purpose for marketers' use of price discount is that it readily presents a kind of value to consumers especially when they have to compare it with a reference price point. In addition, the finding is in agreement with the findings of (Farrag, 2017; Osman, Chan & Foon, 2021; Mittal & Sethi, 2021) that reported that price discount has a significant relationship with consumer patronage of GSM products. They averred that price discounts are more effective in inducing stock piling, and purchase acceleration, moderate in brand switching and new product trial in that order but are not effective enough in inducing customers to spend more.

## **Bonus Offer and Consumer Patronage**

Table 3: Result of Pearson product-moment correlation analysis the relationship between bonus offer and consumer patronage of GSM communication service

Correlations	•		
		Consumer patronage	Bonus Offer
<b>Consumer Patronage</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	.769**
_	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	350	350
<b>Bonus Offer</b>	<b>Pearson Correlation</b>	.769**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	350	350
**. Correlation is signifi	icant at the 0.05 level (2	2-tailed).	

Source: SPSS Computation Output, 2025.

The correlation table revealed that there is a significant relationship between bonus offer and consumer patronage of global system for mobile communication service with a Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient values of (r = 0.769, p = 0.002 <0.05). This result is in consonant with findings of (Foley & Fahy 2019; Strader & Ramaswami, 2014; Olavarrieta & Friedman, 2021; Srivastaval, 2019; Nalcacia & Yaci, 2014) their findings confirmed that bonus offer has a significant influence on consumer patronage. Therefore, bonus offers are effective in inducing consumers to buy a particular product. This is also useful in encouraging and rewarding existing consumer to buy a particular product.

Furthermore, the finding is in accord to a great extent with the findings of (Heilman et al., 2021) that discovered that bonus offer has a significant and positive effect on consumer patronage. They also reported that customers purchasing huge quantity than the regular size would be offered the bonus pack. Bonus offer is used to attract new customers and encourage them to try out a product as well as to retain existing customers and keep them engaged.

#### 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research work has demonstrated that there is a strong, significant and positive relationship between sale promotional techniques and consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State of Nigeria. The study concludes that free sample is positively and significantly related to consumer patronage of GSM communication services. Price discount has a significant

and positive relationship with consumer patronage of global system for mobile communication service. The study concludes that bonus offer is positively and significantly related to consumer patronage of GSM communication services. Based on the findings and the conclusion of this study, the researcher recommended the following:

- 1. Global system for mobile communication service providers should continue to give free sample to their customers and GSM users since it is a significant sales promotional technique that will go a long way to increase consumer patronage of GSM communication services in Delta State.
- 2. GSM communication service providers should sustain on giving price discount to GSM users so as to entice them and also increase consumer patronage of GSM services in Delta State.
- 3. Global system for mobile communication service providers should invest more on the use of bonus offer in order to attract more prospect/customers of GSM network for enhanced patronage.

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