

Digital Marketing: A Comprehensive Performance Strategy

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ABSTRACT: This is an era of digitalization where information technology has become a medium for every activity executed, the marketing field is no exception. Customers' increased usage of digital platforms has created newer opportunities for marketers to reach them. An understanding of what motivates a customer to make a decision is crucially important as it offers a deeper deliberation on the part of the marketer. This paper attempts to clearly understand the concept of digital marketing in the light of a young and techno-savvy target audience. The researcher attempts to gain deeper insights into the online customer's perceptions of performance, quality, value and standards of goods and services they order using the online platforms. An effort has been made to understand the contemporary trends of attracting and retaining customers through digital marketing activities. The research paper explores the transformative influence of digital marketing in the lives of today's well-versed digital customers.

KEYWORDS: Digitalization, Digital marketing, Internet, Digital initiatives, Digital Transformation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Digital marketing is a platform widely used by most businesses for promoting and selling various types of products, ideas and services to current and prospective customers. It has developed as an indispensable trend for companies to reach customers of different demographics and psychographics. The decline of traditional advertising and promoting has led to the rise of digital forms of reaching customers, generating newer opportunities for entrepreneurs to attract potential customers through virtual platforms. The online channels, viz., Websites, Instagram, Facebook and Emails provide meaningful interactions with the target audience and help deliver customer value and satisfaction. It is a

crucial tool that offers opportunities to connect with the audience, grow a virtual presence, cost-effective promotions, global reach, real-time analytics, enhanced customer engagement and personalized targeting.

Customers have also developed a new habit of using their smart devices to search for goods and services and initiating a rating check before making a purchase decision. They have become extra vigilant, critical, proactive, smart and well-informed. The passion for using digital devices is increasingly exorbitant, demonstrated through the well-connected audience using Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram and the like. A rational customer experiences the comfort of reaching the digital entrepreneur with little effort and time. By accessing business websites and browsing for goods and services, they place online orders with ease and convenience. Payments are inevitably made using electronic devices, viz., smart cards, online banking and mobile phones. The payments are processed which leads to the physical delivery of tangible products and the digital access of intangible products, viz., e-tickets.

II. REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

The popular terms web marketing, online marketing, internet marketing and digital marketing can be used interchangeably. Philip Kotler defines digital marketing as "a set of activities that a company or person runs on the Internet in order to attract new businesses and develop a brand identity." As compared with traditional methods of marketing, digital marketing techniques are more cost-effective, in terms of reaching a larger target audience, building brand awareness and driving greater sales volume. Modern times have witnessed the indispensability of the digital world, which embraces digital entrepreneurs and customers to engage actively on the Internet. Connecting with

digital customers is easier for entrepreneurs as the potential customers spend a lot of time and effort on electronic devices, provided they do not have to compromise on speed, navigation and accessibility. The availability of user-friendly digital content provides convenience and adds to customer satisfaction and delight.

Modern organizations are thoroughly entangled in communicating with customers, promoting their ad campaigns and selling goods or services through virtual platforms and Internet technology. Google.com, Amazon.com, Youtube.com, LinkedIn.com, Yahoo.com, Alibaba.com are a few examples of internet-based companies that have strongly revolutionized internet usage. The beauty of digital marketing is amazing and beyond imagination in seeking greater reach. The power of digitalization

is enormous, which has been explained with the help of some real-world examples. Facebook is the most widespread social media platform owner which does not create its content, Amazon is the most appreciated retailer that does not hold any inventory, Bitcoins is the largest bank that embraces no actual cash and Airbnb is the biggest player that provides accommodation facilities without owning any real estate. Companies set up their virtual marketing presence using various forms to reach the target audience and provide a competitive edge. Figure 1 illustrates the different variants of conducting an online business and reaching potential customers effectively. It includes innumerable strategies, viz., websites, online advertising and promotions, online social media, electronic mail and mobile marketing.



Figure 1: Conducting Online Marketing

Source: Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2014).

The increased popularity and acceptance of electronic and quick commerce have transformed the consumer path to acquiring goods and services. Marketers, also very smartly adapted to this transformation by interacting with consumers through their omnichannel existence. They started practicing Marketing Web 4.0, implementing a move from traditional marketing strategies to digital marketing strategies to deliver the final purchases to the consumer. This new comprehensive interface model is tailored to the customers' needs as it offers realistic and personalized solutions. When focused on real-time data, it can make quick adjustments, whenever required. It allows to record the previous actions, user-specific likings and preferences, which can be deliberated for future purposes.

Furthermore, the advanced technology that benefits digital marketers and helps them reach their target audience includes Search Engine Marketing, which comprises Search Engine Optimization and Pay Per Click. Undoubtedly, it is expected that the search engines should identify the user query, choose keywords and propose relevant pages. The basic purpose of these inventions is to deliver the required data to the end users immediately. When optimal results are gathered from web searches, it contributes to increased online traffic, helping websites to stand in the topmost position in cyberspace. Being present at the top helps drive awareness and trust for products and services. Online traders leverage this opportunity by running social media advertisements, both paid and organic forms, across

various platforms. This practice helps improve the visibility of the web pages in Search Engine Result Pages (SERPs) and particularly help online entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

Virtual entrepreneurs are dynamic and perform innovative and complex responsibilities of reaching current and potential customers. It comprises various domains that impact the marketing approach and its outcome. A thoughtful consideration to understand the different marketing domains in which the business operates is indispensable for any marketing entrepreneur, as it

permits them to make learned and well-informed choices about marketing approaches and channel their drives to meet the needs and demands of the target audience. Figure 2 depicts the four fundamental online marketing domains, viz., B-to-C, B-to-B, C-to-C and C-to-B, based on who initiates and to whom it is targeted. It is crucial to understand these domains as it incorporates the success or failure of the marketing efforts. The vital competencies of marketers to execute the domains effectively help to achieve competitive advantage.

	Targeted to consumers	Targeted to businesses
Initiated by business	B-to-C (business-to-consumer)	B-to-B (business-to-business)
Initiated by consumer	C-to-C (consumer-to-consumer)	C-to-B (consumer-to-business)

Figure 2: Online Marketing Domains

Source: Kotler, P. & Armstrong, G. (2014).

As a result of digital initiatives, viz., improved connectivity, ever-growing internet users and reduced costs for end-users, the digital transformation in India is growing fast. The continuous desire to innovate and reshape has led to an expectation in India's digital market to grow from 5.15 billion USD in 2024 to 55.37 billion USD by the end of 2034 (Source: Indian Digital Marketing Market Report and Forecast 2025-2034). Furthermore, E-commerce and online marketplace are likely to reach ₹ 7 trillion by the end of 2025 (Source: India Brand Equity Foundation). As a result of expected compounded annual returns, more and more businesses are expected to prioritize digital platforms and various associated channels as the most gainful business performance strategies.

Yet, another important aspect for research discussion includes the digital marketing funnel

approach, depicted in Figure 3, which is a stepwise process that online enterprises practice to understand and reach potential customers. The different stages in the funnel help the business comprehend and simplify the task of converting new visitors into permanent customers. The funnel framework is predominantly widespread over the customer awareness stage to the customer retention stage. It represents the dilemma that drives an online user before procuring a product/ service for regular use. During the awareness stage, a visitor tries to gather more and more information through different means, viz., social media, organic traffic, website links, word-of-mouth, press releases, emails and more. A visitor spends time on a website to read a few pages to understand the crux of what the entrepreneur offers. The accessible online material and the digital content enhance the engagement and

understanding of the user, which allows the potential customer to move down the funnel.



Figure 3: Digital Marketing Funnel

Source: Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2017).

Beginning at the top, with an extensive range of probable customers, the above approach depicts the various stages up to the bottom of the funnel with the most dedicated and loyal customers at the lowest end. A funnel undoubtedly depicts a visual illustration of capturing leads and comprehending the journey of the final customer, which is a great technique for entrepreneurs to maximize the conversion rate and step toward the next level. The challenge for the marketer is to nurture the visitor at different stages by applying various attractive strategies to retain and convert a mere online visitor into a dedicated customer, resulting in increased revenue with minimal effort.

III. KEY CHALLENGES

To address the real challenges and reduce the associated risks, a marketer must diligently understand the needs and motives of the customers. The increased usage of the internet and adoption of smartphones have transformed customer experiences, preferences and behaviour. Enlightened customers are inclined to make the right choices for themselves, after acquiring approvals and validations from friends, relatives and peers. Online entrepreneurs must recognize and appreciate the importance of a robust customer who is educated and empowered to express themselves on social media platforms. Word-of-mouth, blogs, comments, ratings and more, create a huge impact and influence on the decision-making power of the rational customer. The key challenge for digital marketers lies in driving expressive and meaningful

exchangesto deliver the right value to the right customer. It is imperative to be transparent and real to nurture and create emotional influences and build credibility.

An attractive and decent online presence by digital marketers to significantly influence their reach and engagement with the audience is sometimes very overwhelming as they do not know, how and where to focus their efforts. The journey begins with reaching a wider target audience and ends with building long-term customer relationships. Digital marketers must concentrate on pioneering brand awareness, positioning brand presence, attracting prospective customers, increasing lead

generation, enhancing customer engagement, fostering brand loyalty, tracking online performance, adjusting existing strategies, providing customer satisfaction and establishing customer relationships. A reliable and trustworthy campaign is a prerequisite for optimal results and greater success in the marketplace. In Figure 4, the challenges sensed and handled by digital marketers in choosing the best digital channel have been discussed. It includes defining the audience, understanding business goals, testing existing channels, adapting to prevailing scenarios and analyzing the final results.



Figure 4: Choosing the best Digital Channel

Source: www.google.com

Adopting dynamic strategies of using digital tools to connect with the online audience through Instagram posts, google ads, emails and influencers ensures that the offerings are personalized and offer useful recommendations. The unique characteristic of customization allows digital marketers to focus on precise targeting and effective communication. Employing methods to showcase products and services through superior-quality pictures, descriptions, videos, reels,

messages and the like is imperative to seek greater attention and expand market reach. Online entrepreneurs harvest greater returns on interactive content by integrating offline and online touchpoints of the customers.

It is quite apparent to estimate, track, adapt and regulate real-time outcomes and seek immediate and substantial advantages through real-time analysis. It enables businesses to review the campaign results simultaneously, without

restricting them to wait and watch, for the results only when the campaigns have ended. The visionary approach through precision targeting, interactive content and online reviews, helps to emphasize the long-run projections and not the immediate perceptions. Hence, with the enhancement in technology, organizations must adapt to the ever-changing environment by being prepared to continuously learn, innovate, adapt and experiment with new technologies and strategies.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

With the rapid evolution of digital marketing at a radical pace, it shall continue to be a dynamic constituent for the success of any business, offering an opportunity for newer innovations, enhanced engagement and better customer relationships. By implementing digital strategies and staying ahead of the latest trends, entrepreneurs can succeed progressively in gathering a greater share of the digital landscape. This shall enhance them to understand the market trend, leverage the business opportunities, provide personalized customer attention and stay competitive. Henceforth, digital marketing signifies an indispensable, dynamic and crucial component of modern business tactics that permits them to meet the current demands and forecast future trends. At the same time, adhering to a marketing approach to offer and deliver customer delight and deepening customer affiliation, through trust, satisfaction and commitment, helps to retain the customer for a long-lasting relationship.

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