

WHY DIGITAL IS IMPORTANT FOR BUSINESS ON IMPACT OF COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The global pandemic of Covid-19 while having its impact on various sectors had a considerable impact on Digital Marketing and Advertising as well, in global, regional and local level. However, this impact for most part was a positive one, rather than what was being witnessed in various other fields such as economy, human resource, etc., While the virus created lot of uncertainties among customers and marketers alike, with respect to health, social life, economic stability, employment, etc., the same also led to behavioral shifts such as working remotely, spending lot of time indoors, adopting to home-schooling, learning new recipes from the internet, increased attention on health and hygiene, avoiding crowded areas, increased social media engagement, shift towards online content, etc., and all of these had an immense impact on marketing and advertising efforts. The behavioral shift was predominantly towards digital platforms and digital content, which created true opportunities for the marketers and brands to connect with the customers digitally more than ever before. With increased social media engagement and craving for digital content, digital Medias provided the marketers with lot of opportunities to cash on. At the same time, this also made the marketers to act mindfully and be socially responsible while implementing digital marketing strategies. This paper is made with an attempt to highlight analyses and understand the impact of covid-19 pandemic on digital marketing and advertising as a whole.

Key word: Digital Marketing, Advertising, Covid-19

INTRODUCTION

Digital Marketing is a branch of marketing that utilizes internet and digital technologies such as Computers, Mobile phones, Websites, Social Media platforms, Application Software, e-mail and other platforms to promote products and services. The development of Digital Marketing in the 1990's and 2000's changed the way brands and marketers use technology for implementing marketing plans and strategies. In recent times, Digital Marketing have become more prevalent, employing combination of Content Marketing, Micro-Video Marketing (M.V.M), Search Engine Optimization (S.E. O), Search Engine Marketing (S.E.M), Social Media Marketing (S.M.M), Influencers Marketing, In-App P.O.S Advertising, Social Media Optimization (S.M.O), eCommerce Marketing, Digital Advertisement Displays, e-mail Marketing, etc. while the Digital

Marketing and Advertising were growing at a steady pace, the outbreak of Covid-19 gave it an unexpected boost, by making the people locked down at home with less or no work hand and influencing a fast-paced behavior shift towards digital platforms, digital media, and digital content. Digital marketing STRATIGIES involves efforts to adopt the advertising to different platforms, and to customize the advertising to different buyers and also to different devices rather than a large coherent audience.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To study the concept of digital marketing
2. To analyze the impact of Covid-19 on digital marketing
3. . To analyze the future role of digital marketing post Covid-19

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Scope of the study is related to understand the concept of Digital Marketing, and to know the impact, that the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic had/has on digital marketing and also understand the future of digital marketing post Covid-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a descriptive analysis of the literature and digital marketing. This study approaches that aims to analyze the influence of factors that support digital marketing to business competitiveness. This helps us to identify the impacts of social media marketing on consumer purchase decision and also how social media marketing help consumer in a purchase.

SECONDARY DATA

The secondary data & information have been collected from different scholars and researchers, published e-books, articles published in different journals. The company related data and information are used which is available publicly on the websites of the companies. The various are other secondary sources to study the impact and the effectiveness of digital marketing during COVID-19 in order to better understand the topic “Digital Marketing”.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study is limited to secondary data
2. Time constraints while collecting the secondary data
3. Generalization of all the data from this study is not preferable.

DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital marketing in simple words can be state as their implementation of marketing plans and strategies though the use of internet and other related digital platforms. It can be defined as a marketing approach that primarily relies on the internet to connect with the target audience through various digital media channels and platforms. Under Digital Marketing, the marketers use internet, mobile devices, e-mails, social media, search engine, video streaming platforms, and other such channels to reach the customers.

However, there are some marketing experts who are of the opinion that digital marketing should be regarded as completely different and new endeavor which requires new and different ways of can target a specific segment of customer based on various factors, and also identify the perfect medium of channel for connecting with such customer base. Unlike the traditional marketing techniques, digital marketing is also interactive in nature. The various social media platforms like Twitter, Face book, Instagram, etc., and A.I based technology like Chabot's incorporates marketing with customer feedback and enables for an interactive two-way communication between the company and the customer.

Advertising though digital platform is very flexible in nature and can be tailored and customized according to the needs and requirements of various customers base accordingly without much hustle and is also optimizable to various display sizes and thus eliminating the drawback of traditional techniques of advertising.

TOOLS FOR DIGITAL MARKETING

As the customers' response for traditional marketing approaches are reducing in recent times, the consumers' engagement with brands and marketing activities through digital platform has increased considerably. This increase in engagement is has led to the development of various digital marketing tools.

- a) Search Engine Optimization:** It is the process of improving the visibility of, and increasing the quality and quantity of traffic to the website or webpage organically (i.e., unpaid results) by optimizing the particular search engine. For example, Google search engine can be optimized in such a way that whenever a related search query is made, the search result would show website link in the first position in organic result section.
- b) Search Engine Marketing:** Unlike S.E.O search engine marketing is a paid process, in which the search engine is paid by the marketers to show their website link on top of the search list whenever the purchased keyword (or group of keywords) is searched.
- c) Social Media Marketing:** Social Media Marketing is that component of Digital Marketing under which the marketer makes use of social networking sites, such as Twitter, Face book, Instagram, Snap chat, etc., to promote their products and services. S.M.M may include both organic and inorganic efforts.
- d) Video Marketing and Micro Video Marketing:** Video Marketing and Micro Video Marketing are gaining a huge customer engagement over the last few years. This is a technique where by video streaming platforms like YouTube and Micro video streaming platforms like Tic Token Vigo Video are utilized by the brands to promote their products and services to the customers.
- e) E-Mail Marketing:** This is a tool used by marketers to target the customers directly though e-mails. Here e-mails are used to send promotional and other kind of messages to the potential customers and create demand for the product or service so promoted.

- f) **Mobile Marketing:** As the number of Smartphone users increasing world-wide, to bank on this opportunity, brands have started to connect with their customers on mobile phones through mobile apps, e-mails, Mobile-Optimizable Websites, and social media.

DEVELOPMENTS AND STRATEGIES

One of the major changes that occurred in traditional marketing was the "emergence of digital marketing" (Patricia Balts, Lording, 2015), this led to the reinvention of marketing strategies in order to adapt to this major change in traditional marketing. As digital marketing is dependent on technology which is ever-evolving and fast-changing, the same features should be expected from digital marketing developments and strategies.

- a) Segmentation:
- b) Influencer marketing

Pull digital marketing is characterized by consumers actively seeking marketing content while Push digital marketing occurs when marketers send messages without that content being actively sought by the recipients.

- a. **Online behavioral advertising:** is the practice of collecting information about a user's online activity over time, "on a particular device and across different, unrelated websites, in order to deliver advertisements tailored to that user's interests and preferences.

B. **Collaborative Environment:** collaborative environment can be set up between the organization, the technology service provider, and the digital agencies to optimize effort, resource sharing, reusability and communications.

C. **Data-driven advertising:** Users generate a lot of data in every step they take on the path of customer journey and brands can now use that data to activate their known audience with data-driven programmatic media buying.

Impact of Covid-19 On Digital Marketing

The widespread of Covid-19 had a drastic negative impact on on-field marketing activities, mainly due to lockdown. However, this opened the doors for digital marketing as people shifted to digital mediums faster than anticipated. The following points explain the impact of covid-19 on digital marketing and advertising.

- i Increased Social Media engagement paved way for increased Social Media marketing.

Due Covid-19 outbreak resulting in lockdown and work from home being in place, people had lot of free time, which they mostly spent on social media. As a result, this provides an opportunity for marketers to capitalize on and better connect with their customers through various Social Media sites, like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.

- ii Shift from K.P.I expectations to lifetime value:

Digital Marketing is traditionally based on analytics and Key Performance Indicators (K.P.I) for measuring the effectiveness and efficiency of digital marketing campaigns. However, the outbreak of Corona Virus has devalued the importance of, and emphasis on K.P. I's and increased the importance of customer lifetime value.

- iii Emphasis of Experiential Marketing:

As people are spending more time online during this lockdown period, the marketers have to emphasis on making the customers online experience engaging or else the chances are that the customer can get bored soon, if the webpage, landing page or virtual environment does not provide a good experience

BENEFITS OF DIGITAL MARKETING

1. Allows companies to promote themselves to large, diverse audiences that could not be reached through traditional marketing such as phone and email-based advertising.
2. Marketing on most social media platforms comes at little to no cost- making it accessible to virtually any size business.
3. Accommodates personalized and direct marketing that targets specific demographics and markets.
4. Companies can engage with customers directly, allowing them to obtain feedback and resolve issues almost immediately.
5. Ideal environment for a company to conduct market research.
6. Can be used as a means of obtaining information about competitors and boost competitive advantage.
7. Social platforms can be used to promote brand events, deals, and news.

8. Platforms can also be used to offer incentives in the form of loyalty points and discounts.

FUTURE OF DIGITAL MARKETING COVID-19

There is no doubt that Covid-19's impact on Digital marketing is positive for most of the part, but going forward in the future, post COVID-19 era the marketers have to maintain or rather improve on the current digital opportunities in order to retain the customer base so acquired during the COVID-19 period.

- i. Being socially responsible in social media: Although the companies have gained a great quantity of customer engagement on various social media platforms, going forward in the future the firms have to maintain this engagement while ensuring that they act with responsibility.
- ii. Maintaining Online Reputation: With an increase in the customers' online time spend, and increase in social media activities, any mistakes from the brands or company's part can lead to faster widespread of negative information and may lead to drastic backlash. Thus, maintaining the online reputation will be very much difficult and essential as well.
- iii. Managing web traffic: Post COVID-19, as the people get back to their normal lifestyles and routines, the challenge in front of the marketers would be to get the same quantity and quality web traffic on their websites and landing pages. The marketers have to continue making engaging digital content and virtual environment even post COVID-19 to manage and maintain the web traffic.
- iv. Investment on A.I based Chat-bots: As the usage of chat-bots are increasing during the lockdown period and the customers finding it as useful service, going ahead in the future the onus on marketers will be invest more on such A.I Based technology while ensuring the U.I and UX is good and make sure that there aren't much of technical issues.

How are companies using Digital Marketing to get ahead?

Field wire's data-driven SEO: We have mentioned SEO as one of the most cost-effective and interesting tools a marketer can use to reach more customers online. But the case of Field wire's data-driven search is a great example of how this works in the real world.

Fieldwork is a web and mobile collaborative platform for commercial construction and they also started their journey with Digital Marketing with a problem.

Here's how digital media industry trends to yield better insights and innovation:

- * Keep up with industry changes. Rather than ignoring cold calls and sales emails, I try to respond with interest. Even if you don't think you'll be interested in their product, salespeople can provide valuable insights into innovative practices within the digital landscape and what successful companies (especially competitors) are doing. Despite their small budgets, startups have the advantage of being nimble where big corporations often have lengthy campaign development periods.
- * Know your customer. Understanding your customer is the key to finding out how to reach and resonate with them. Read up on external research studies detailed in magazine or journal articles. If you have the budget, use surveys or focus groups to gain further insight into your customer's mindset, behavior and reactions to your product.
- * Always be testing. This startup mantra is equally as important in advertising. Pay attention to which platforms are most active, as well as the types of messages that have had the highest response rates. Testing your messaging and graphics will tell you a lot about your target audience based on how they respond. For example, we test copy for different features, like price, security and ease of use. Be sensitive and objective about your use of language as well. Speaking as your target audience would makes you relatable and gives them the incentive to engage.
- * Focus on search engine optimization. Organic searches help us reach potential and current users via search engines and move customers down the sales funnel. We pay attention to what people are searching for and optimize our site accordingly, as well as create quality, discoverable content.

Some of the downsides and challenges of digital marketing you should be aware of include:

- Skills and training -You will need to ensure that your staff has the right knowledge and expertise to carry out digital marketing with success. Tools, platforms and trends change rapidly and it's vital that you keep up-to-date.
- Time consuming - tasks such as optimizing online advertising campaigns and creating marketing content can take up a lot of time. It's important to measure your results to ensure a return-on-investment.
- High competition - while you can reach a global audience with digital marketing, you are also up against global competition. It can be a challenge to stand out against competitors and to grab attention among the many messages aimed at consumers online.
- Security and privacy issues - there are a number of legal considerations around collecting and using customer data for digital marketing purposes. Take care to comply with the rules regarding privacy and data protection.
- Complaints and feedback - any negative feedback or criticism of your brand is can be visible to your audience through social media and review websites. Carrying out effective customer

service online can be challenging. Negative comments or failure to respond effectively can damage your brand reputation.

DIGITAL MARKETING VS. TRADITIONAL MARKETING

The main difference between digital and traditional marketing is the medium through which an audience encounters a marketing message. While traditional marketing uses traditional media like magazines and newspapers, digital marketing uses digital media, such as social media or websites.

Of course, traditional marketing doesn't mean it's old fashioned. Traditional marketing still plays an important role in people's lives with the ever growing need to step out of the digital world. Reaching the connected consumer where they are—online, has revolutionized traditional marketing and media tactics because it's shifted the entire framework—digital marketers don't just talk to consumers, they engage them.

Any marketing effort that takes place online is digital marketing. Paid advertising, leveraging and crating content across a multitude of platforms, email campaigns, social media, and a myriad of other strategies have all taken marketing by storm, and they will only continue to accelerate and evolve.

Conclusion

In the present scenario, digital is at the heart of all companies and Digital marketing is an essential tool in the hands of brands and marketers for implementing marketing strategies during the pandemic period. While the field of marketing in general was drastically impacted, the branch of digital marketing has seen a tremendous boost. Covid-19 has put Digital marketing on Fast-track and paved the way for further development and enhancement of digital marketing activities. As you can see, digital marketing is crucial in the survival of today's businesses. You need to expose your brand to a bigger audience if you want your business to grow. Digital marketing may sound scary at first, but if you take the time to learn about it, you'll see that your company has a lot of potentials to expand because of it.

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