

DIGITAL MARKETING: THE NEW HYBRID ELEMENT OF PROMOTION MIX

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Abstract : Digital marketing has emerged as an important and new hybrid element of marketing mix in the last decade. The marketers are employing digital technologies for various reasons through different modes and means. The present article discusses the meaning, importance, strategies and developments, channels for employing digital technologies, advantages, limitations and regulation of the digital means.

IndexTerms - Latest developments, Importance, Channels of digital technologies, Advantages, Limitations and Regulation.

Introduction

Digital marketing is the use of digital technologies like mobile phones, internet, display advertising and various other digital mediums. With the dissemination of digital technologies in everyday life marketers and big corporate houses are using this platform for marketing their products.

The use of Online Behavioural Advertising (OBA) technologies allow the marketers to tailor the advertisements according to the users and provide 24/7 support to customers. Consumers can get the assistance over the digital mediums and can easily communicate their feedback on social media, blogs and websites. This is emerging as a medium through which customers and businesses can both benefit. The word of mouth communications and communication among consumer communities has much more credibility in the eyes of customers. Consumers are more likely to trust other consumers' experiences as they are not planned and are not sent by the companies.

Ease of Access: Information can be easily accessed through digital technologies. Various digital platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Forums, and Email etc. are multi-communication channels through which information can be exchanged efficiently and effectively in a short span of time.

Competitive Advantage: The digital technologies create brand awareness as well as brand reinforcement at a cost less than the traditional marketing tools. Successful interactions require that business should be consistent in its communication through various platforms. These platforms provide multi-way communications (communication between marketers and consumers besides communication among consumers themselves) and accordingly enables the marketers to changes their marketing strategies.

Effectiveness: The digital marketing works effectively with consumers. As consumers prefer to avoid uncertainty and social media augment the awareness about the brand. Thus consumers like to interact directly through various social media to reduce the uncertainty.

To measure the effectiveness of digital marketing the marketers are making use of the factors like increase in the brand awareness, image, relationship with customers, likes, shares, comments at the social platforms, increase in market share and sales volume etc.

Importance of Digital Marketing

The younger generation is tech savvy and is used to e-marketing. Even the older generation is trying to make themselves acquaint with the digital technologies. It offers them ease, simplicity and fast information.

Affordable: The cost of digital marketing is very less in comparison to traditional marketing mediums like television, radio and newspaper. Cost of providing information per potential consumer is very small.

Effective Targeting of the Audience: Digital technologies effectively communicate the messages to the target audience. As this new technologies attract the attention of consumers in comparison to print media. People always want something new and exciting in their life and digital marketing is successful in making inroads in their daily lives by impacting their lives significantly.

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Traceable Results: The impact of digital marketing can be ascertained by the marketers simultaneously. Various social platforms make two way interactions possible. Thus, data regarding consumers' reactions is collected and provide useful insights for decision making.

The Effectiveness of Digital Marketing: The digital marketing is much more effective as it enables the marketers to offer the personalized offers, advertisements and products as per the customers' requirements.

The Comparative Analysis: The comparative analysis of competing products and services in terms of quality and services are provided in digital market. Consumers can get such type of information on their device itself at the click of button.

The Acceptability: Today consumers are starved of time and they need information at a very fast pace digital marketing fulfils this requirement of consumers. People now search on internet for any kind of information.

Wider Reach: The digital marketing provides the platform to communicate world wide. The audience can communicate anytime and anywhere.

Thus, digital marketing offers an effective and efficient tool in the hands of marketers. Now they can reach the wider audience at a fraction of cost of traditional mediums in a less time and can offer personalized offers and at the same time take note of the consumers' reactions in their marketing strategies.

Latest Developments and Strategies

With the evolution of digital technologies the traditional marketing strategies are also being adapted as per the latest fast changing technologies (Patrutiu Baltas, Loredana, 2015).

Segmentation: Segmentation helps in introducing the appropriate market strategies for various consumers segment. Both business-to-business and business-to-consumers sectors are being identified to target specific segments through digital marketing.

Influencer Marketing: Every community has some people who influence the decision making of the community members these people are termed as influencers. These influencers of the society can be approached by marketers through paid advertising tools like Facebook advertising, sophisticated sCRM (social customer relationship management) etc.

Thus, in push digital marketing marketers themselves send the messages whereas in pull digital marketing consumers enthusiastically seek information from marketers.

Online Behavioural Advertising: In this users web surfing information on a particular device is observed to have an idea about user's online activities and interests and accordingly the advertisement is tailored as per the consumers' tastes and preferences.

Data-driven Advertising: Consumers create lot of data in their expedition as consumers and the marketers make use of this information collected in virtual world through digital channels like websites, e-mail, blogs, mobile app without intruding the consumers privacy. Data is also collected in real world from directly interacting with consumers in brick and mortar set up, CRM database. Thus, by making use of this data marketers found the customers loyal to their brands and accordingly provide personalized relevant communications in real time. Thus, affecting buying behaviours of consumers. This can be possible only through data-driven advertising/ people-based marketing or addressable media.

Collaborative Environment: In this the consumers themselves offers ideas on the company websites to the marketers for serving them well. The most promising idea is considered for execution only after the careful analysis of feasibility. Thus, a collaborative environment is created in which consumers provide User Generated Content (ideas and strategies to serve them well) through digital technologies and the marketers implement the promising ideas.

The digital technologies have radically changed the promotional strategies of the marketers as well.

Remarketing: In remarketing the advertisements are directed to the target respondents who have earlier visited the website or searched for the products or services which are advertised. Thus, advertisements are focused only to those who have earlier searched for similar kind of products resulting in effective advertising.

Game Advertising: In this the advertisements appeared in the video games itself in the form of commercials appeared in the sports game or brand names of the products like cars, guns or clothes which are considered as status symbol.

Thus, through digital technology companies can identify their potential consumers easily and can target their tailor made advertising campaigns on these consumers. Thus, minimizing the expenditure getting waste on the advertisements. Marketers can easily use various social media platforms to show their advertisements to the specific group of consumers' selected on the basis of age, gender, occupation, residential area etc. Further, the potential consumers can be provided the information about the products and services for which they recently browse the websites.

Ineffective Forms of Digital Marketing

The budget of digital marketing is improving in the overall marketing budget while that of traditional marketing is falling. The digital marketing offers the advantages of offering personalized messages, products and services to the consumers. But there are certain circumstances in which digital marketing is not very effective. The following points summarized this aspect:

Prioritizing Clicks: It means the display of advertisements after click. It is simple, fast the cheap but most of the time advertisements are considered irrelevant by consumers or ignored by consumers thus having little impact. It should be used in conjunction with other techniques.

Balancing Search and Display: Marketers considers only the impact of last search on the internet and the impact created through the other efforts are disregarded. Moreover, whenever viewers click on an ad the marketers directs them to a landing page. Landing page

offers some incentive to consumers so as to search beyond the landing page and thereby helping the marketers in implementing their marketing strategies effectively. It has been observed by marketers that both the search and display are important as display creates the awareness and people click on the digital advertisements when doing a search.

Understanding Mobiles: Understanding smartphones, tablets is important for the digital marketers to perform well by making use of mobile advertising. The reach and use of smartphone has increased in the last decade so it creates a flexible digital tool but sometimes it is considered invasive by consumers.

Cross-Platform Measurement: While making use of digital platforms the marketers should be conscious of the cross-platform measurement. Both television and radio are electronic mediums but they do not directly compete with digital advertising since they are cross-platforms. Cross-platform measurement provides a check on duplication so that the same audience is not reached again and again. Though, when the advertisements are on consumers' device it is difficult to get them measured.

Targeting, Viewability, Brand Safety and Invalid Traffic: Cookies are considered as a form of digital advertising as it enables the marketers to track the browsing history of web users but causing problems when deleted by surfers and unable to sort among the multiple users, inability to find out when the consumers are not shown advertisements or when the cookies have been deleted. Another major issue in digital marketing is that advertisement may not be actually seen by the potential target market. Brand safety is concerned with the immoral and aggressive, violent issues etc. Invalid traffic relates to identifying fraud when an advertisement is aired.

Techniques to Improve the Effectiveness of Digital Marketing

Content Marketing: One of the way by which the effectiveness of digital marketing can be enhanced is through content marketing. Content marketing means providing the relevant information needed by the customers at the places where they are looking for it. Content marketing increases the visibility of the brands and make the brand relevant to consumers.

Interesting Mail Titles: Consumers are daily bombarded with numerous advertisements. Differentiation is a factor that set apart an advertisement from the clutter. It enables the marketers to create an ever lasting impact on the minds of consumers. Consumers attracted by the advertisement will like to see the whole advertisement and recall it easily.

Establishment of Customer Exclusivity: As per the consumers buying behaviour consumer data base can be created and accordingly they can be provided with the special offers and deals to build up the consumers' loyalty. Moreover, the regular customer can be followed easily through digital technologies with minimal cost.

Low Technical Requirements: It may be possible that consumers are not tech savvy. In such situation to get the maximum out of digital marketing it is necessary that advertisements should have low technical requirements and can be easily viewed or understood by consumers

Rewards: The offers, rewards or the prizes create excitement and engagement among consumers. The prizes or deals increases the chances of success of digital campaigns.

Channels

One of the important dimensions in marketing is to find out the channel through which the maximum targeted consumers can be reached and consumers can also provide their feedback. There are various channels which qualify are:

- **Affiliate Marketing:** Though it is considered cheap and easy way to market but it is not reliable in terms of new customers demand creation. A bad affiliation can create the major risk of bringing a bad name to the brand along with claiming wrong commission. Legal remedies are available against this but it has its own limitations. However, it is effectively used for sites having less traffic.
- **Display Advertising:** In display advertising various methods adopted are interstitial ads, advertising blogs, contextual data, networks, classified or dynamic advertisement, ads on the search engines etc. to show the advertisements on the internet.
- **Email Marketing:** It is considered to be cheap and fast method to communicate the target audience. But the success of this method depends upon the contents and images of the mail as some may consider this form of marketing as intrusive and irritating. It is suggested by researchers that less images/ graphics and causal style are preferred in emails in comparison to visual appeals and formal style language.
- Search engine marketing
- **Social Media Marketing:** Social media channels like Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram etc. are now being used widely to give wide range publicity to products and services.
- Social Networking
- **Game Advertising:** In game advertising the products and services advertisement is displayed in game only either in a understated way or through advertisement banner. The type of game, involvement with the game and product, entertainment, congruity between the advertisement and game are some of the factors that influence consumers' attitudes towards advertisement besides the attitudes of consumers towards the game itself.
- Online PR

Video Advertising: In this type of advertising the advertisements is shown when online videos are being played. Online video advertisements can be played before the video is watched (Pre-Roll advertisements), played during the video (Mid-Roll advertisements) and played after the video (Post-Roll advertisements). The main advantage is that when the advertisements are played

it interferes the watching of videos therefore cannot be easily avoided. These video advertisements also have the feature of sharing them which is equivalent to the word of mouth advertising. Entertaining videos goes easily viral. The longer a video advertisements play chances are that they are easily remembered. Longer advertisements create more brand recognition but at the same time they are considered intrusive in nature and viewers may form a negative image of the brand.

Advantages and Limitations

One of the prominent feature of digital marketing is to reach vast number of people at one go meaning thereby that digital marketing has wide reach. The quantum of activities taking place in the digital arena can be easily measured. Also the effectiveness of digital advertisements through the consumers' response rate can be easily ascertained.

Digital marketing creates a two way communication. Consumers can provide feedback on the community blogs or through e-mail directly to the marketers. Marketers longed for this long term communication and word of mouth marketing by using strategies related to target consumers.

It can be accessed anytime, anywhere and consumers are directly approachable to marketers. It also enables the companies to sale directly to the consumers through online system. Due to the advancement of digital technologies now there is no requirement to have brick and mortar stores.

However, its availability is dependent on the internet. It is a restraint in its growth as in certain areas internet is still not available and if available then it has poor connection. Also there is a lot of clutter on the internet. Among many advertisements it is very difficult that consumers get attracted to the advertisement and see the whole ad.

Furthermore, consumers when search for a product or service on the internet then chances are also that consumers can easily see and compare the competing products or services as well. It may be possible that competing brands offer better quality at same price or same quality at lower price or better quality at lower price. If that happens then it's obvious that consumers are going to buy the competitors brands. Some consumers consider the online communications with distrust and this tarnish the image or reputation of the company without any specific reasons.

In digital media both positive as well as negative feedback about a company is dissimilated very fast among the online consumers' communities. It may be possible that an individual or small group of people (anti brand campaigners, protesters etc.) try to destroy the image of digital marketers. Protestors may create a Doppelganger image. Doppelganger image is created by the people by making alteration in the original image which is being created by the marketers. It may cause harm to the brand image.

Moreover, the use of digital marketing is limited to consumers' goods only and it is not very popular for industrial and pharmaceutical goods. Also most of the time digital marketing provides information to that section of the society which does not have buying power therefore digital marketing fails to increase real sales volume.

Self-Regulation

The ICC Code has the guidelines need to be followed by the digital marketers during digital marketing. The main highlights of Code self-regulation is that consumers should have clear option to indicate that they do not want their information to be collected by marketers. There should be clear indication from marketers' side that a particular website is for commercial purpose and is being sponsored and controlled by marketer. Special protection should be provided to the children during the digital marketing. There should be some specific ground to believe that consumers have some interest in the product then only the marketers should communicate directly with consumers and provide them detailed information. On social webs the ethics and practices of the commercial behaviour needs to be followed and messages should be presented only when the forum has shown their willingness.

Conclusion

The buying behavior of consumers is very much affected by the changing tastes and preferences. The online shopping and digital marketing has made the buying process much more complicated. The marketers are under great pressure to reorient their marketing strategies as per the ever changing buying behavior of consumers. In future empirical study to ascertain the impact of digital technologies on consumers buying behaviour can be conducted to provide the marketing insights of great importance.

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