



Digital Marketing: A New World of Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

Digital marketing is different from the traditional marketing campaigns in the way of their appearance. Some of the examples of traditional marketing tools could be Newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements, Television advertisements etc. Over the years the Internet penetration and smart mobile have been on continuous rise. It is in this context that the marketers therefore must make effective strategy in this era of digital transformation age. The digital marketing or online marketing makes effective use of Internet tools such as emails, various social sites, and Internet based advertising, text and MMS as channel. In online marketing or digital marketing, it is considered as to how a tool can bring the prospective customers to company. The concepts of digital marketing could be applied for B2B and B2C companies, but as far as best practices are concerned they differ significantly in both the cases. There are many facets of digital marketing such as Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Pay Per Click (PPC), Native Marketing and E Mail Marketing. In this paper we have discussed all facets of digital marketing with a view to provide their limited description and application in different situations.

KEYWORDS: Digital Marketing, SEO, PPC, Automation Software and Email Marketing

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing can be defined as the marketing effort which applies appropriate electronic tools and techniques and can be effectively used by so as to convey the promotional messages and may fathom the impact via customer experience. However, in common parlance the marketing campaigns that are displayed on a PC, a tablet or a mobile phone or any such devices are typically identified as digital marketing. Some of the illustrations of digital marketing may include the online videos, online display advertisements in emails, the promotional advertisements appearing in various search sites, the advertisements appearing on social media. It is different from the traditional marketing campaigns in the way of their appearance. Some of the examples of traditional marketing tools could be Newspaper advertisements, magazine advertisements, Television advertisements etc.

It has been projected that total number of households having Internet accessibility at their respective homes is all set to reach 143.93 million in 2025. Total number of internet users in India presently is estimated to be 845.68 million. It can be projected that total online users will attain the figure of 1,134.04 million in 2025 (Statista, 2021). It is matter of surprise that around 92 percent Indians used messenger service as online application, while around 90 percent of online services users visited social networking sites. As a marketer, it is therefore much more important to make effective strategy in this era of digital age. The marketers must ensure the presence of their corporate enteritis through online advertising and promotional measures. This will help the organizations to build a powerful brand, with synergistic effects with traditional marketing techniques and thus providing better and holistic customer service that in turn may attract more potential customers.

What is digital marketing?

The use of Internet or any other form of digital communication in order to reach the potential customers and target market with an objective to promote the products, brands, services, ideas or concepts is called Digital marketing or online marketing, the digital marketing or online marketing makes effective use of Internet tools such as emails, various social sites, and Internet based advertising, text and MMS as channel.

Thus, a marketing or promotional campaign using digital communication in one form or other is termed as online marketing or digital marketing.

Inbound marketing versus digital marketing

Sometimes there is confusion between Online or digital marketing and inbound marketing. Inbound marketing has been primarily designed to pull the potential and prospective customers to the company rather than pushing the product, service or idea to them. HubSpot, the inbound marketing software provider has coined the term 'inbound marketing' in year 2006. Owned and earned media are used in different ways and applications by Inbound marketing so as to attract prospects. Owned media channels are fully owned by the business and it has absolute control over it. The examples of owned media are: the website of the company, the blog pages owned by company executives, the social site profile pages and YouTube channel. Whereas in earned media it is the coverage that company may earn as a result its hard work. Such as coverage in print media and on the news sites. The company has less control over earned media.

It is to be mentioned that the online marketing or digital marketing uses the tools of inbound marketing such as emails and other online contents. Both of them aim to attract the potential customers by means of their visits and eventually to turn them into their customers. However, both of them are different in terms of the use of tools and the goal to be achieved.

In online marketing or digital marketing, it is considered as to how a tool can bring the prospective customers to company. It is the part of corporate strategy of a company to either use multi channels or else to channelize its efforts on a single channel. Whereas the inbound marketing considers the objective first and then assesses, examines or evaluates the existing tools and then formulates a combination of the tools to find that will help them reach the target audience and customers.

It is to be understood that, it is not important to find out the difference between the two. Rather as a marketing professional one must understand that the best results are obtained when both of them work together. The inbound marketing therefore provides the broad structure and goal for the digital marketing and in the process ensures that each online marketing channel is directed toward the goal of attracting the prospects.

B2B versus B2C digital marketing

The concepts of digital marketing could be applied for B2B and B2C companies, but as far as best practices are concerned they differ significantly.

- The purchase decisions in the case of B2B take longer time in placing the final orders therefore longer sales funnels are there in B2B. In both the cases the relationship-building is the core area on which marketers must work. Whereas in B2C cases the customers usually respond to short-term offerings in better way.
- The B2B transactions are mostly based on reasoning rationality and past experience, and the trained and skilled B2B digital marketers focus on these traits. Whereas in the case of B2C the content is usually based on emotions, therefore the digital marketers here focus more on making the customer feel good while purchasing an item or service.
- Typically, the B2B decisions have more than one person's or a group's input. That is why the marketing materials supporting the purchase decision process should be shareable among the groups and individuals and be downloadable. On the contrary the B2C customers, like one-on-one connections and transactions with a brand.

It will not be out of place to mention that there are some exceptions to every rule. For example, A B2C company which is offering a high-value product, such as a car or refrigerator, might go for more information and content. Therefore, the strategy in this way preferably needs to be centred around the customer base, whether one is in B2B or B2C.

Types of digital marketing

There could be many facets of digital marketing since there could be many ways of customer interface while using digital media. We are providing some of the examples in this context.

Search engine optimization

The most powerful and quite popular term SEO or Search engine optimization, is basically a marketing tool and it should not be considered as a type of marketing. SEO could be defined as the art and science for making the web pages of organizations to be attractive enough to search engines.

When we say that digital marketing is the art and science both we mean it. SEO is considered as a science because it necessitates one to go for research and to weigh various factors that contribute to attain the best possible ranking. In order to optimize a web page one must consider following important elements:

- The content and its Quality
- To what extent and degree the user engagement is there
- What is the level of Mobile-friendliness?
- How many inbound links are there and what is their quality?

How strategically one may use these factors would make SEO a science, but at the same time the unpredictability inherent therein would make it an art.

In SEO, it may be stated that there is no thumb rule or any formula that is responsible for ranking highly of the webpage. The algorithms have been changed by Google consistently or almost constantly, so it is not possible to make accurate predictions. What one may do is to constantly or at least periodically monitor one's web page performance and go for requisite adjustments accordingly.

Content marketing

SEO therefore can be considered as a deciding factor for content marketing. It is also a major strategy that is based on the dissemination of appropriate and useful content to the target group.

As in the case of a typical marketing strategy, the main objective of the content marketing is to generate leads that help them to convert into final customers. However, we must understand that while doing so, it takes different course in comparison to traditional advertising. Instead of demonstrating prospects with potential or existing value, it may offer the value for free in writing.

In what way the content marketing matters, there are several reasons to prove, such as (On the basis of a survey conducted in 2022):

1. The survey results indicate that the investment for content management is one of the biggest indicators of organization's support for content marketing. 43% of marketers have been satisfied with the company expenditure on content marketing in 2021 budgets. And 66% of the marketers expect good increase in the 2022. (20% of them feel that the increase could be more than 9%.)
2. However, around 50% of the marketers feel that the areas in which the investment could take place in 2022, would be more in video, events (digital, in-person, hybrid), owned-media assets, and paid media.
3. 80% of the marketers have said that content management must be good enough to enhance brand awareness, while 75% feel, it builds credibility/trust and 70% feel that the content marketing efforts educate target audience.

Social media marketing

Social media marketing aims at moving the traffic and therefore enhancing brand awareness by involving people in discussion and debates in online manner. Some of the most known platforms in this context are Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn along-with YouTube.

In social media marketing there is active participation of audience, it is therefore one of the best ways to grab attention of prospects and existing customers as well. Social media has been a potent and powerful media for B2C marketers and has also been doing exceedingly well in B2B arena as well. As per the survey conducted by Content Marketing Institute, 65% of content marketers of B2B segment enhanced their usage of social media in the year 2022.

Built-in engagement metrics has also been offered by social media marketing, which may be quite useful in getting one understand how well one is reaching their audience. One is able to decide as to what kind of interactions may be useful or beneficial to him or her, whether it means the number of comments or total clicks or total likes to their website.

Sometimes the awareness is the main objective of the social media marketing and the purchase may not be the goal. We may witness that most of the brands have been using social media marketing to have dialogues with target audiences instead to encourage them to be involved in direct purchase. This may be especially true in respect of brands that interact with older audiences or provide products /services that are not appropriate for impulse purchases. It may depend on the goals of the company.

Pay-per-click marketing

The company posts the advertisements on a platform and pays every time one clicks on the advertisement; it is known as pay per click (PPC). Though it could be much more complicated as to how the people would see the

advertisement so posted. Similarly, the frequency of viewing the advertisements of the platforms is another issue to be tackled. Whenever the search engine results page finds a spot the engine in turn fills that spot with an instant auction. The search engine has the algorithm in order to prioritize every advertisement on the basis of a number of factors such as:

- The quality of advertisement
- The relevance of keywords
- The page quality on which the advertisement is to be landed
- The amount of bid

In every pay per click campaign the viewers are supposed to complete one action after viewing the advertisement, as per strategy of the organization. Such actions taken by viewers may be termed as conversions, and as such it could be transactional or non-transactional.

Whatever one chooses for as per the target audience conversions, one may track them via their selected platforms so as to understand as to how their campaign is performing.

Affiliate marketing

When someone makes money by promoting the business of some other party or organization it is known as affiliate marketing. One could be the promoter itself or some type of the business that works with the promoter, but the overall process in both the cases shall be the same.

In this model there would be sharing of revenue between both the parties. The affiliate gets commission every time someone purchases an item that the affiliate promotes. The merchants would pay to the affiliate every time a sale is made in which there is the help rendered by affiliate.

Usually some affiliate marketers may opt for reviewing the products or services of just one company, may be on a blog or through reviews on third-party sites. While other affiliate marketers may have entered into relationships with many merchants.

The first step towards affiliate marketing is to find an appropriate partner in the form of affiliate or merchant (if affiliate is looking for a business). One may go for using a platform that connects affiliates to retailers or else one can either begin or join the single-retailer program.

For a retailer that wants to work with affiliates or do a business partnership with affiliates, there are many ways and options available. The retailers must undertake many things and activities to make their program appealing and attractive to the potential promoters. The retailers must provide the essential tools to the affiliates so that they are able to succeed in the business arena. This may include good incentives for better results and also the requisite marketing support along-with promotional materials.

Native advertising

Native advertising could be defined as marketing efforts in disguise. The whole purpose of native marketing is to blend with related, relevant and surrounding contents so that it's less visible and obvious in comparison to advertising.

We may say that the native advertising has been conceptualized in response to the negative feeling and indifference of certain consumers towards the advertisements. The consumers of the day know full well that the company or promoter or marketers of an advertisement has paid for it to run on the media channels, the consumers may infer that the advertisement is biased and therefore avoid to watch it.

Therefore, the native advertisement gets along with this bias and offers product / service related information before it is sent for promotional purposes. It therefore downplays the advertisement aspect.

It is in this context that the native advertisements must always be labelled clearly. The marketers may use the words or phrases like "Special feature" or "sponsored." When these phrases / words are not mentioned, readers or viewers may spend sufficient time with the content and after a long time they would realize that whatever they had gone through was an advertisement.

If the consumers get exactly what they have been expecting, they would certainly feel better about the content, company and the brand. It is to be clearly understood that native advertisements should be less obtrusive in comparison to traditional advertisements, but in no way they should be deceptive.

Marketing automation

Marketing automation implies and enables the software to make digital marketing campaigns, effective and efficient and at the same time improving the relevance of advertising.

As per one survey:

- 85% of Indian consumers think that the personal touch is highly effective and quite appealing
- 78% of Indian consumers feel that they would support the brands and thus would like to be engaged so that they may explore them better.
- 74% of the companies have found the real value of personalization, nonetheless approximately 60% could not understand it.

Marketing automation has made the companies to live up with the aspirations of personalization as perceived by the consumers. Marketing automation may allow the brands towards:

- Collection and analysis of consumer information
- Marketing campaigns targeted design
- Sending and posting the marketing messages quite appropriately.

Email marketing

The email marketing is quite simple to understand, especially in the era of digital technology — One may send an informative and promotional message and expects that the prospect not only views but also clicks on it. But, the execution may not be such a simplistic procedure. In email marketing at the first place, one has to ensure that the emails are delivered, wanted and seen. This implies one of the following (or all the options mentioned below):

- The contents are individualized the content, both in message body and in subject field.
- It must clearly define what kind of emails the subscribers would want
- There must be unsubscribe button for the subscribers.
- Email marketing must integrate both the transactional and awareness centred emails

The companies may want their prospects to see their campaigns as value laden service, not just a promotional effort.

Email marketing has been quite effective tool and technique in its own right: Almost 90% of the professionals so surveyed have considered it as the most effective lead generator in every terms. The results may emerge better if the emails marketing can be incorporated with other techniques available in the field such as marketing automation, that allows the marketer to segment and schedule their emails in such a way that they may meet their customers' expectations in more effective manner.

The benefits of digital marketing

In the present era, digital marketing has become widely used mainly because it has a broad coverage of large audience, however there are certain other benefits it offers. Some of these could be given as below.

A broad geographic reach

When a company or business unit or even a marketer post an advertisement in online mode, generally the people may see it irrespective of their place of location. Thus there is no geographical limitation as far as the release of advertisement is concerned. This helps the marketers to easily expand the reach of their businesses.

Cost efficiency

The digital marketing proposes not only to reach a bigger and broader audience in comparison to the traditional marketing but has lower cost overall. There are certain overhead costs associated with the print advertisements, the prime and non-prime television spots. Thus total cost may be high in traditional marketing. As far as control is concerned, the traditional advertisements may provide the marketers less control on whether their target audiences could watch the advertisements at the first instance or not.

In the digital marketing, the marketers may write just one piece of content that may in turn draw the website visitors to the blog page as long as the message or content is active. The marketers can be involved in email

marketing efforts that aims at delivering the requisite messages to the targeted customers as per a schedule, and it is quite easy to change the schedule without incurring substantial cost.

When one adds up all the benefits so delivered, the digital marketing aims at giving the marketers more flexibility and better customer contacts in terms of every penny that is spent in terms of digital marketing.

Quantifiable results

In order to understand the digital marketing and its impact, the marketers must have to find out as to how many customers has been attracted via a campaign and also how much revenue has been generated by it ultimately. The bigger question is that, whether the marketers are able to get that for a non-digital marketing campaigns?

In case of traditional marketing strategies there has always been a question asking the customer, “How did you come to know about us?”

But, this does not apply to all the industry segments and types. In most of the cases one to one conversations are missing between the company and the customers, and also the surveys may not always provide complete results.

Through the digital marketing, the marketers may monitor the results in quite simple manner. Now-a-days there are good number of software and platforms in the case of digital marketing. The software may track automatically the required and desired number of conversions that the company may get eventually. However, that may imply the email open rates, total number of hits / visits to the home page or even the direct purchases made by the customers.

Easier personalization

It is a fact that in case of digital marketing the marketers may gather customer centric data in a smooth manner that the traditional marketing may not provide. We may deduce that the data gathered and compiled in digital mode seems to be more summarized and specific.

For example, if a company is offering financial services and wants to give special offers to the audience who could have looked at their products or services. The marketers understand that they will have better results if they target the proposed offers to meet the interests of persons. The marketers in this case may think of preparing two separate campaigns. One of the campaigns may aim at young families who may consider the various plan of life insurance at relatively low instalments, and the other one may be for new generation entrepreneurs who could have taken the retirement plans of the company.

If the organizations do not opt for digital marketing, then to have all of that data as mentioned above is not possible. Though, this is possible with automated tracking. Similarly, the companies may be quite interested in knowing as to how many phone calls have been made? What has been the profiles of the customers? Through automated software it is quite possible for the marketers to know as to who has gone through the brochure they have sent out?

As we see, every data so collected and hence the related information is readily available in digital marketing. The useful date and information is always there with the digital marketers.

More connection with customers

In digital marketing the marketers may communicate with their customers as if they are sitting before them. Actually, it allows the customers to communicate with the marketers.

In case of social media strategy, it is really good when the target audience goes through the latest post uploaded by the marketer, but it sounds better when the target audience gives their valuable comments or share the post. It implies that there would be more comments, or likes or share surrounding the product or service of the company, as well as more visibility.

If there is more interactivity between the company and the customer, it may benefit the target audience too. If the audience is active participant in the content related to brand they will understand it better. Eventually that sense of belongingness may result in a strong brand loyalty.

Easy and convenient conversions

Digital marketing allows the customers of the company to take swift action once they view the advertisement or the content. However, in case of traditional advertisements, the best response the marketers can expect, is a phone call sometime later after someone goes through the advertisement. But sometimes immediate response may not be possible in case of traditional advertisements as the customers may not have the time to contact.

In case of digital marketing, the customers may click a link or even save the blog post and may move along. The customers may not be involved in the purchase right away, but they could stay connected with the marketers and may offer the company a chance for interaction later on.

Digital marketing creates growth

Thus the digital marketing campaigns should be the strategic focus of any business organization and it must be integral part of overall marketing strategy. Needless to say, the organizations and business units did not have a chance before to have consistent and constant interaction with their customers. It is to be mentioned in this context that only digital marketing offers great degree of personalization with customers.

The Future Direction:

Digital marketing should not be seen as the challenge to traditional marketing. In fact, both may co-exist. The digital marketing does not underplay or poses threat to the professional acumen of marketers. When viewed in correct perspective, it helps to enhance the awareness of organizational business to the target customers, and hence aims at increase of revenues and may help the businesses to stay firm and ahead during economic downturn. We have witnessed all this during Covid 19, the pandemic. During Covid 19 the digital technology helped different segments of industry. Over the past few years there have been various measures taken by the Central and State Governments towards the digitalization. Average consumers are experimenting towards new ideas and finding out more on Internet so as to have the best option from the affiliate or partners across India. Various dimensions of digital marketing are presently available. We have discussed some of them in the aforesaid paragraphs. The digital marketing is becoming quite popular in present time and if the trend is extrapolated it may be said that the new decade shall be the decade of Digital Marketing. The digital marketing is economical especially in comparison to traditional marketing.

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