

Digital Marketing: Transitional Journey of Marketing

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Learning Outcomes

Present chapter aims at making the readers understand the very essence of digital marketing, right from the time of its inception. The requirement of changing the face of marketing and also what are the available ways to execute the strategies of digital marketing in the contemporary world are the other aspects that would be enlightened.

Introduction

Ravi was sitting on the couch of his room planning to buy 'home furnishings' while scrolling through the screen of instagram and Oh God! To his utter surprise, his favorite celebrity uploaded a video of his newly bought home furnishings (Brand XYZ) and also the brand (XYZ) that the celebrity bought, gives discount with entering the name code of the celebrity. Ravi got his solution for buying the best home furnishings through an influencer on instagram. Did Ravi realize that he got captured by a marketing strategy of modern world? Most obviously the answer is no.

"The best marketing doesn't feel like marketing." – Tom Fishburne, Founder of Marketoologist

Marketing strategy aims to capture the target audience and persuade them to buy the products and services without making them realize that they are being targeted by the triggers of some marketing force. In order to move on with this objective the biggest revolution in the marketing sector is 'transition of marketing from traditional to modern', 'from radio to tablets', 'from pamphlets to e-mails'. In the times when the type of money that we used to carry has transformed from cash to plastic money to E- wallets and when writing letters to a far living friend changed to video calls, Digital marketing was pretty much desired.

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Digital marketing takes the process of marketing a step further that goes hand in hand with almost the entire world transforming itself into E-world. Almost every sector and every industry is thriving to shift towards digitalization hence such time calls the marketers to renovate the marketing process also. Changing is not only desired by the side of marketers but also the consumer since the modern consumer is turning into digital consumer. When the markets have reached to the bedrooms and bathrooms of the consumers with help of the screens, it is imperative for the marketing world to switch to its digitalized form.

What is Digital marketing? Digital marketing is all about bringing a revolution in the traditional marketing strategies. When marketers opt for promoting their products & services through mobile apps, social media, blogs and more, then it is said to be digital marketing. When marketing is done through any type of screen or electronic gadget, it is digital marketing. Marketing aims at promotion of products & services by opting various methods which earlier used to be print media, hoardings, radio ads etc. the present times made “Marketing” land on a new platform that reaches the target audience right in the point more precisely. The changing times, changing world, changing consumers and changing buying habits demand digitalization and in the sphere of marketing, ‘digital marketing’ is the supply to this demand.

History

Digital marketing is a concept, the roots of which, dates back to 1980's when ChannelNet (earlier known as SoftAd Group) with the help of the magazines provided floppy disks to the consumers and those disks used to contain some multimedia advertisements promoting the cars. Although most of the retailers did not even get their domains till the year 2000 but the period in between 2000 – 2010 brought a lot of change in the marketing sphere due to change in the capabilities of various devices to access digital media. Since then witnessing ups and downs digital marketing has altered the shape of marketing in almost every nation.

Fun Facts

- In the last 6 months email opened by mobile devices increased 80% worldwide.
- Emails with no subject line were 8% more likely to be opened than those with.

Concept

Digital Marketing is popularly known as ‘Online Marketing’, ‘Internet Marketing’, ‘E- Marketing’ and ‘Web Marketing’ across the globe. While in UK and worldwide, term ‘Digital Marketing’ is widely recognized, Italy use the term ‘Web Marketing’ more often and USA term it as ‘Online Marketing’. Digital marketing revolves around making use of the marketing strategies through digital channels like Social Media, Mobile Apps, E-mails, different virtual handles of public figures or influencers, managing electronic databases of the customers and more.

“We need to stop identifying what people are interested in and BE what people are interested in.” –Craig Davis, former Chief Creative Officer at J. Walter Thompson

People today need more of the things which are most easily available and with which they could connect in the easiest way possible. Digital Marketing helps the brands showcase themselves as what the consumer desires to see in the brands. Through this way of modern marketing it is easier to stay in touch with the target audiences and remain in their thoughts for a longer duration. Poorti a young, enthusiastic woman starts her day with reading newspaper. She also likes to gain knowledge through various platforms of digital world and loves to read blogs, good contents, online essays and more. Imagine Poorti to come across an advertisement of handbags (FLOWER) in the newspaper she reads in the morning. Coincidentally she came across a digital advertisement of another brand (AURA) appearing on her mobile screen every now & then.

The advertisement that she reads in the newspaper might not stay with her throughout the day but the advisement of the brand AURA will not let her forget itself, because the brand would pop up every time she uses her phone and uses search engines or social media. This is the power of digital marketing. The marketing strategies adopted through digital platforms prove to be more impactful than the classic model of marketing. Changing times demand changing marketing and if not done so the companies might lose not only the potential consumers but also the existing ones. Though this newer version of marketing also calls for innovation, it is the need of the hour to indulge in the newer version of marketing.

Why Digital Marketing

“Google will know that you are hungry for sushi before you do.” – Ben Kunz

This is not new that a person is thinking to buy a product say laptop and in the following days he is surrounded by a number of advertisements of laptop. No matter which site he is logged in on or he is scrolling through the pages of social media websites, the advertisements of laptops are everywhere. This is the power of digital platform and this power helps the marketers to target the most apt audiences looking for their products. This is so because the search engines help the marketers in reaching the desired audiences. As Adam Audette has rightly said “Today it’s not about ‘get the traffic’ – it’s about ‘get the targeted and relevant traffic.” With the help of Digital marketing platforms it is easier to filter this traffic and make the right set of audiences reach the brand. This is not the only positive side of Digital Marketing. It has got several other benefits for the marketers and consumers both.

- **Affordable:** The channels of digital marketing are considered to be less expensive and affordable in comparison to the traditional ways of marketing. Therefore the companies could use additional funds on innovative strategies which are again a call of the changing world.

- **Ease in Access:** The number of Smartphone and tablet users is increasing every day and that too at a very good pace. This has increased the number of people connecting themselves to multiple sites and also leaves the marketers with a good number of audiences who are easily accessible. This ease in outreach to a good number of prospective buyers paves the way for growing opportunities for the marketers.
- **Flexible:** The platform of digital marketing offers a variety of options from E-mails to SEOs to influencer marketing and more. Therefore the marketers are free to test and use their marketing strategies and could use the best suited strategy for the best suited set of audiences. This helps the marketers to be more creative and develop the content as per the set of audiences they want to cater to.
- **Outreach:** With the help of this form of marketing it is easier for the companies to get themselves recognized. In the time when markets have reached to the bedrooms of consumers it is effortless to appeal people and to reach them since a good number of alternatives widen the platforms for being noticed by high number of people. There are many brands which were not known to people earlier but are a big hit on the platform of virtual market now.
- **Multiple Contents:** In the words of Anita Campbell, “You cannot expect to just write and have visitors come to you”. By merely giving your advertisement in the newspapers or magazines companies cannot expect consumers to be rushing towards them. Today when every brand is in tough competition it is need of the hour to come up with not only amazing contents but also to use variety of multimedia techniques to make lasting impression on the customers. This is only possible if the marketers take a turn towards digital marketing.
- **Interaction:** Every consumer likes to be valued and to be given personal attention. Unlike traditional marketing techniques which were designed for the masses, the techniques of digital marketing are more focused upon giving personal attention and value to the customers. Recall the days when shampoo advertisements used to run on the televisions or radio sets. Everybody used to either watch or listen to them but not everybody would want shampoo that is anti- frizz. Digital marketing with the help of the search engines captures the individual requirements of the people and infact there are brands which caters shampoos made exclusively for a particular indivisual. Hence the anti-frizz shampoo brand can easily target the ones who are in of such shampoo and thereby win the battle. Consequently it becomes easier to interact with the consumers, sometimes getting known by the consumers sometimes unknowingly, and to take proper advantage of this interaction.

- **Influential Figures:** Celebrity endorsing is not a new concept but the changing time has taken it to another level. Earlier this form of marketing used to shoot advertisements with celebrities and people used to get influenced by them. Now the consumer is more rational and do not follow others blindfold, not even celebrities. As a result it was required to take a step further and that has been possible with the help of digital marketing. People nowadays follow their celebrities on various social media sites wherein these public figures are sharing their normal routine life and their true sides. Many companies are making use of this platform and the celebrities share the videos or pictures using the products of the said companies (and are being paid for this) and the consumers believe it to be true that the celebrities are pretty much into that company and turn to buy those products.
- **Buying Turned Smarter:** Digital marketing has changed the definition of buying too. Unlike before the marketers need not put all of their efforts towards making the customer enter the store rather his own devices are themselves turned into store. Just one proper content loaded advertisement and one click can make the customer buy the product. The only thing that the marketer needs to know is where and how to use that content. Content of the advertising must be focused towards making the consumer feel 'this product can make my life easier' and everything else will certainly fall into place.

Fun Facts

- Articles with photographs receive 94% more views.
- 47% of Americans say that Facebook is the number one influence over their purchases (social media today).

Types of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing is not a concept that has been given to the world lately rather it is in existence from the moment people are making use of electronic devices. Then why is so much buzz about digital marketing all around. The answer lies in the following types of digital marketing which have evolved as a revolutionary trend in the world of marketing and has made the marketers to connect emotionally with every single customer and hit them right in the point which would persuade them to buy the products.

- **Social Media Marketing:** Various social media platforms like LinkedIn, Facebook, twitter, Instagram and more gave the marketers more exposure and the option to connect with the consumers in a more intimate way. Through these handles companies can bag individual attention of the customers and also could cater to their individual demands. Moreover this platform helps the companies to get into two way interaction with the customers. The number of likes and the comments can make the marketer understand that in which direction he must take his next move to please the customers.

Example

Varun spends most of his time over social media sites and no matter on whichever site he is, he comes across a number of brands catering a good number of products. He wanted to buy a linen shirt and was looking at various websites on Google. Lately he has been experiencing that whenever he opens his Instagram or Facebook account a number of advertisements of linen shirts of various brands captured most of his screen space. A good number of them even display the price of the shirt and has 'buy now' option. This is social media marketing done by the various brands catering linen shirts.

- **Affiliate Marketing:** This is a form of digital marketing that involves a mediocre party that promotes the products of the said company in turn of commission. The one who plays the role of this mediocre generally promotes variety of products of various E- Commerce platforms (Amazon, Flipkart etc.) and popularize them amongst his own circle and connections in lieu of some percentage of the price as commission. The popularity of products and persuading the consumers to buy the products then becomes the responsibility of the affiliate marketer.

Example

Aastha has recently joined Amazon as an affiliate and filled the form of Amazon affiliate on Google. Now since she has become an affiliate of amazon, she is promoting the products being sold by amazon on various platforms. She is sharing the buy link of some products over her whatsapp groups and also on her Facebook and Twitter handles. Whenever any of her friends buy the products from the link shared by Aastha, Aastha earns certain percentage of commission. This is how affiliate marketing works.

- **Viral Marketing:** It is not always true that if word 'VIRAL' is used then the associated component must be something negative. In the case of digital marketing it is a blessing. When a company wants to reach a good number of customers without spending a large sum of money then viral marketing is the answer for this. Creating a buzz, some funny component or some post that compels the audiences to post it in loop could reach masses at a glance. It is a bit tricky sort of marketing since it is difficult to create something with the objective of spreading in the large group of audience that too with conveying the original essence of the company and without being manipulated. Although in return it could bring along a heavy traffic on the e-portal of the company.

Example

Company named 'INARA' that sell garments, made a funny video of their onsite employees in the background of which, the garments are being hand weaved. The funny video went viral and alongwith that the brand 'INARA' gained popularity amongst people and also boosted their sales.

- **Influencer Marketing:** A good number of people over social networking sites (may them be celebrities or not) are having high number of followers. Marketers nowadays through these public figures popularize their products. The companies pay these influencers per picture or per video for promotion of the company's products and in turn a good number of people get influenced from their favorite public figures and move towards the products or services they use. In most of the cases people also start to follow the brand being marketed by these public figures and thereby these brands earn a high number of followers.

Example

Imagine your favorite actor baking a cake in her instagram/facebook/twitter video and using a cake mix of a brand named 'MILY'. That celebrity must be having a very high number of followers, say in billions. So basically just by uploading a baking video by the celebrity 'MILY' reached billion of people and this might increase the followers of 'MILY' who might turn into customers.

- **Content Marketing:** Content marketing is the next big pillar of marketing and work towards educating towards certain products or certain category of commodities. This form of marketing does not focus upon promoting the brand rather educating the customers. This phenomenon works towards generating trust and faith of customers towards the marketers and in turn this built on relationship persuade people towards their brands. Content marketing aims to answer people to their query of 'how this product is going to improve their life?' If people get answer to this question then they develop faith in the brand giving the answer and understand that the respective brand would in future also make the customer understand everything pertaining to the product. In the sphere of digital marketing the content marketing works through blog, social media, youtube platforms and more.

Fun Facts

- 74% of mobile users make internet searches before making a purchase.
- 50% of all searches begin on a mobile device.
- **E- Mail Marketing:** This type of marketing is generally done through help of e-mails. Companies send promotional e-mails to potential and existing customers in a group. The same way as a particular message is being broadcasted through whatsapp, the concerned companies send a particular promotional mail to a large number of potential and existing customers at once. This form of marketing is a good one to attract potential customers and also to stay in the mind and thoughts of the existing customers.

Fun Facts

- Influencer marketing is a \$1 billion industry on Instagram.
- The average consumer attention span is 8 seconds.
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** This form of marketing diverts the view of audiences or web traffic towards the website of the brand. If a marketer masters this technique then a large number of potential buyers gets diverted towards the said brand rather than choosing others. This is done by optimizing the website according to the exact need of what the buyers are looking for. People use various search engines like Google, Yahoo, Bing etc. and mostly prefer the option available at the top results of the search engine. Majority of people never skip to the next page of the results being displayed by these search engines. So this particular technique calls for optimizing the website in such a manner that no matter from whichever angle or with whichever choice of words the product is being searched but if the customer is looking for something close to what the brand is selling then the said brand must be on the top of the results of search engines.

Example

Avika is looking for a washing machine and has some particular specifications in mind as to what to look for in the washing machine. She writes 'the best washing machine' in the search column of Google and on top of the list 'ABC washing machine' appears. She then writes 'best fully automatic washing machine' then again 'ABC' was at the top of the list. She read one of the questions in 'people also ask' of Google that generally appears immediately after the first option on the results page of Google. The question was 'which washing machine is best for the beginners and to her surprise again the answer was 'ABC washing machine'. This is so because the washing machine brand named ABC must have optimized itself in such a way that it seems to be the answer for all the related keywords for the said criteria. This is how search engine optimization works.

Conclusion

Since like every other thing is moving towards its innovative side so is the case with marketing and it is turning itself into Digital Marketing. As this form of marketing is gaining popularity it also has other positive sides also but the biggest advantage of this form of marketing is it helps to target the desired set of audiences and gives them personal value which is most liked by the consumers. A number of platforms are available to the marketers to make use of this channel of marketing and even develop a group of like-minded customers and persuade them to buy the products over and over again. The only factor that has to be kept in mind by the marketers is that digital marketing offers two-way interaction between marketers and the customers and hence whenever any type of grievances or feedback comes from the side of the customers then the marketing team must respond to the same in the most positive manner so as to keep them happy for long.

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