

## INTEGRATION OF DIGITAL MARKETING IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

*The whole service industry and service providers, in the present time are in the serious need of addressing, and customizing the needs of their customers, using their preferences, taste and undoubtedly their own experience. This can be done better with the digital marketing which in the past couple of years has come forward with tremendously even in the pandemic time. Through digital marketing came into existence long back a decade ago, but the popularity gained to it after 2015. Its importance started realising then. People throughout the globe wants their things to be easy, handy and at their doorstep and they are finding the ways for the same. The digital marketing is perhaps solution to their needs. The Digital marketing is becoming need everywhere whether as a trend or as people's choice. Digital media has played a proliferation role in digital marketing. The available platforms are quite in number and all becoming popular day by day and because of this the product is becoming cheaper even though variety of the products is available. Irrespective to needs, services and products are blossoming every day. The digital marketing has changed the way a business reaches to customers and every industry is disrupted due to digital marketing. The digital marketing's ability to observe customer's behavior and perform the marketing function accordingly is the biggest difference in the digital marketing and traditional marketing. Digital marketing performs on real time basis. In the Hospitality Industry the market disruption has occurred few years ago, especially after pandemic, and the way to make services available to consumer has changed drastically. Digital marketing then becomes important for the hospitality industry as digital marketing collects the data from market through research process and to make its analysis and behave accordingly for customer. However, on the other side the digital marketing through internet provides a detailed insight into the behavior of the customer, in the electronic environment. This has changed the way the decisions are taken. This paper is an attempt on emphasising on integration of digital Marketing in the Hospitality Sector with the view to give recommendations how hospitality industry can use digital marketing in better way to make optimum benefit out of it.*

**KEYWORDS:** Digital Marketing, Pandemic, Avenues, Customers, Strategies, Multimedia, Hospitality.

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### Introduction

With the introduction of new technologies, the better and new ways of approaching the customer is coming out. Digital Marketing in this way has become an important as well as unavoidable part of almost every business. The Significant and dominating impact of the digital marketing has completely impacted the manner in which industry makes the promotion of their products to the potential customers. The need of digital marketing in hospitality industry is becoming the important as never before, as the customer has access instantly to every type of information along with the latest information and undoubtedly with the best prices. The digital marketing plays a decision-making role in every business and hospitality industry is not an exception to this. This will not be wrong to say that perhaps hospitality industry was the first industry which adopted the Digital Marketing. Because of such early adaptation of

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digital marketing has helped the industry to be on top in digital marketing trends and undoubtedly the benefit to sale is taken. In the earlier years the people use to generally select their destination, and book their tickets of transport and Hotel using the historical method of computer access. But this has gradually replaced with mobile phones and people started moving on mobile phone for their travel itineraries. The digital era has also changed drastically from its inception and has grown up to a different level. It is totally different from the face as it was having in earlier years. The hospitality industry is wide ranging industry which includes various professional and works such as hotels, restaurants, tour guides and etc. Before digital marketing came into existence, the role of such persons and components were most need of the success of hospitality industry. The increasing use of mobile phones, the cheaper availability of internet, lower prices of digital marketing options, and growing importance and use of social media are few of the reasons for the adaptation of the digital marketing at the widest level. The incoming of various start-ups, in such an exhausted and saturated hospitality industry through digital mode only is an indication that digital marketing is indispensable need of the today's business and hospitality industry is not an exception to this at all.

### **Evolution of and Growth of Digital Marketing**

The Hospitality can be defined as the business of making people welcome and keep them happy and relaxing when they are stay away from their home. Hospitality is now more for leisure purpose as compare to the needs of those who travel across for the business and official purpose. In ancient days the ability to travel was only with upper class and royal people. In the ancient roman times if we look history, up to 17<sup>th</sup> century, young people of high class and royal families were encourage to go on "Grand Tour". At the later stages the religious pilgrimage is also encouraged and the travel to religious places becomes the need of every believer of that religion. For example Hajj or yearly pilgrimage to macca, or travel to "Chaar Dhaam" in hindu followers, has become a common and needy practice. The hospitality word includes the word tourism and it came first into existence in 14<sup>th</sup> century. The introduction of rail travel and emergence of automobile travel has given ignite the fire of development of the tourism. In the year 1952, when commercial flights started from London, England to Johannesburg (South Africa) and Colombo (Sri Lanka) has started the jet age and the beginning of modern tourism industry. In the today's world around 4 billion people uses social media, every professional and working person must know about digital marketing specially and at least some core of digital marketing. The consumption of the digital content has become a daily part of the life of people. It is not hypothetical to assume that soon traditional marketing will be taken over by the Digital Marketing, that too completely. The traditional platforms will disappear. This is because there are number of advantages of Digital Marketing. The first one is that it is cheapest as compare to traditional marketing. The reach to larger number of customers in a short span of time is the second biggest advantage. The technological advancement has shown a considerable attrition of large customers of traditional marketing. As we can see people has moved on to the digital equipments such as tablets or phones, laptop etc where the digital marketers have their access.

The evolution of the telephone technology in the sales era, the shift has been observed into it with rise of Television media and then it moves to marketing era. The industrial evolution of marketing Era, has saw the biggest and deepest change in the marketing history, which the availability of personal computers. However, a big question is still pending to answer that what these developments means for us for future of marketing. The answer is perhaps in what we have now. That is to say what we are witnessing as of now. To look into future, we have to look into the past and to find out or assess what future holds for digital marketing. Here, we have to look into the major technological developments which have made the changes into the marketing. These are:

- **Internet:** The use of the internet by the people at the mass level is perhaps the biggest reason which has impacted the digital marketing over a period of decades. The people using the internet is increasing with reproduction rate. Digital Marketing in hospitality has increased with the introduction of browsers such as WWW and navigator. With the expansion of user base, the digital function has increased from mails to search engine such as yahoo or Google and introduction of E-Commerce companies such as Amazon or E-Bay. For digital marketing it was like a golden line. The Email, Junk box and popup has become new marketing tools along with the all traditional marketing modes such as TV commercial, Newspaper commercials, and telephone sales. The search engines provide the details of new websites which are created and which provides users various information about products, and services which they desire at their comfort level.

- **Huge Data:** Here to understand that data of online activities is stored digitally and known as digital information. The digital information is undoubtedly fastest growing unique information with most of the text-based information which has generated digitally. This is also known as Big Data. This Huge Data or Bog data has assisted in tracking the patterns and trends of Human behaviour and it helps in marketing to increase the set one.
- **Smart Phones:** Can we imagine a world without the smart phones, and tablets? Till 2007, when the smart phone has not entered into the market the market was digitalised only through the internet on personal computers and laptops. These phones and tablets have exploded the entire digital market and the digital marketers are still trying to catching it up. The introduction of I phone has changed the entire phone based digital marketing. The smart phones have taken over the entire personal computers and laptop and has become primary digital marketing online. The proportion of the smart phone ownership in total digital market is more than 80% and increasing with the introduction of 4G and 5G. The digital world is now in our pocket.

#### **Why Hospitality Industry is Important?**

Traditionally the hospitality is in the form of welcoming the guest in a feeling of goodwill especially for the people of other places or other countries. Hospitality in its grammatical and spiritual sense implies the warmful and respectful welcome as well as protection from the enemies. It was a part of cultural exchange to build up the understanding and appreciation among themselves. The word host merged from latin word hospes which means stranger. The synonym words are host, or hospital or hostel or a very common Hotel. However now a day's hospitality is an industry at its large and is a part of servicing industry which broadly includes hotels, restaurants, sports events, and other tourism related services. The hospitality industry is quite important not only for customers but also for economy. let's have a look its importance for above:

- **Importance to Economies:** The hospitality sector presently contributes around 11.56% of world's GDP. Future forecast indicates that around 69 million employment opportunities are about to generate in hospitality sector in next 10 years and the growth rate of the industry will be around 10 percent. The movement tourist comes to any place and spends their money on entertainment and others, it generate income source for the locals and improves the local economy. They also spend money in purchasing the local items and medicines and crafts etc. in addition to spending the money on entertainment purposes. This helps the local government to develop infrastructure like roads and transport facility. Of we look into 2017, alone hospitality industry generated around 313 million jobs throughout the globe. It is around 10 percent of total employment creation in the last decade. Hospitality also gives jobs in varied culture industries, keeping theatres as well local festivals.
- **Importance to Customers:** Hospitality makes available necessary services (such as stay and food) for guests of every kind, i.e. whether they are travelling for any reason such as business trip or leisure or luxury. Hospitality is a vital requirement for every leisure trip and business trip, and is of supreme importance to every customer and to businesses as well. Although it does not mean that whole Hospitality industry serves only tourist, but also serves to locals such as restaurant and entertainment parks. The Restaurant and amusement park has shown a tremendous growth in the last decade, except in the years of pandemic. Indians alone spend around 26 percent of their earning on food and for eating outside. The hospitality industry is emerged with the primary objective of serving customers and hence shall provide them a high and great quality services and environment, with excellent workers who can provide them highest satisfaction and professionalism. This sector does not only provide the employment but also gives a strong career to professionals as well. It provides opportunities to varied classes such as event planner, general manager for facilities, and others.

#### **Problems of Digital Marketing**

Digital Marketing undoubtedly puts up the new problems and challenges for the digital marketers. Digital marketing tools are changing fastest and all the digital marketers has to keep themselves updated regarding how these marketing techniques works and how customers reacts on such digital marketing channels and how effectively they can use such channels for soliciting the market for their product. It is also very difficult to seek attention of the user because the customer or receiver is continuously inundated with the competitive ads. It is also difficult to make analysis of such a huge data collected using the digital

marketing channels and put the new marketing efforts accordingly. The difficulty involved in collecting and making analysis of Data effectively in marketing, also indicates that digital marketing requires a lot of efforts and market-based study based on in-depth understanding of consumer behaviour, which is not an easy task to complete. In spite of numerous benefits and advantages, there is varied nature of challenges for hospitality industry in this digital era. For example, hotels need to deal with such challenges more successfully to stay away from competition and any how put the efforts in such a way to solicit more and more occupancy to their hotels. In today's changing scenario where travellers use to get a lot of information from the varied sources, habits and choices of travellers is changing. Because of such changing or increasing choices, their shopping style has changed drastically. As per statistics collected in various research and surveys, social media influences around 51% of travellers to make their travel plan change. Around 25% travels uses their mobile apps for booking tickets for them and around 45% users uses mobile phone to plan their travel. Around 72% of elite class travellers and around similar percentage of business travellers uses various mobile techniques or apps to conduct a travel search or do booking. These all indicates the consistency of use of digital marketing in the hospitality industry, but with the balanced use of such technology taking care of involved risks.

### Conclusion

It is true that all industrial revolutions came into existence by major technological innovation or say technological evolution. Even today, we are now running in the fourth (technological) Industrial Revolution, where we are living in an unprecedented technological innovation, with around 80 percent of the data has been generated in the last 5 years and not less than 25 billion smart devices are in circulation. We cannot completely ignore the fact that despite of growing demand and effectiveness of the digital marketing, the need of traditional marketing strategy is still carry importance and sufficient to retrieve the customers. For instance TV commercials are still takes a major position and stands at 3<sup>rd</sup> number in global marketing, but yes it is increasing at lower pace. Digital marketing has its own fascinating advantages which makes it preferable communication channel or alternative for the modern market. Some of the product categories are there where significance of digital marketing is quite high and impressive, such as electronics, Fashion, games and music etc. The world with number of increasing users of internet, rural people are also coming forward and becoming the part of this digital revolution. The decreased prices of data or internet, the advanced technological gadgets with internet enabled, the eagerness of using digital platforms, technology has put the surging trends in digital marketing. Here it should be noted that emphasising on digital marketing tools does not at all mean that we are discarding the traditional marketing tools completely. An integration of old marketing tools with digital marketing tools makes it more solid marketing technique. As we discussed above, hospitality is a complex system which involves number of subcomponents in itself such as accommodation, entertainment, restaurant, transportation and others. It includes inbound, outbound as well as domestic travel for business people as well other citizens. Considering its diverse nature, the significant contributions made for economic and social values, the digital marketing may give an immense benefit and growth to the hospitality sector and hospitality sector can achieve new heights in it.

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