



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Online Marketing: Emerging Trends and Issues

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 14, 2024	<p>Digital marketing is one of the important components of marketing that uses the internet as well as the online platforms, digital media, and technologies for the promotion of services/goods. Digital marketing has become almost inevitable for brands and marketers. Nowadays, from clothes to medicine, everything reaches our doorstep within a few clicks. Content marketing, social media marketing, search engine marketing, email marketing, display advertising, influencer marketing, interactive marketing, chatbot, visual search, etc. are existing and emerging trends of digital marketing. The purpose of this research is to find out the impact of the existing and emerging trends in digital marketing on consumer buying behavior and up to what extent these trends affect the consumers. Descriptive research- the type of conclusive research was conducted for achieving the objectives of the study. Data were collected from 136 respondents who are exposed to digital marketing strategies using the non-probability convenience sampling method. The findings of the study suggested that existing trends such as social media marketing, content marketing, search engine marketing, and display advertising create an impact on consumer buying behavior. Whereas emerging trends such as visual search, interactive marketing, influencer marketing, and personalization have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.</p>
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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, from clothes to medicine, everything reaches our doorstep within a few clicks. Everything in today's time is getting digitalized, marketing strategies also. Digital marketing, in the current era of the internet, has completely changed the scenario of marketing. Digital marketing is one of the important components of marketing that uses the internet as well as the online platforms, digital media, and technologies for the promotion of services/goods. The importance of digital marketing is increasing day by day with the increase in internet adoption and internet data consumption. Digital marketing has become almost inevitable for brands and marketers now. Digital marketing is such a platform where trends keep on evolving and marketers and companies need to understand such trends and implement such strategies for their business as well. Content marketing, social media marketing, search engine marketing, email marketing, display advertising, influencer marketing, interactive marketing, chatbot, visual search, etc. are existing and emerging trends of digital marketing. These current and emerging trends of digital marketing create a huge impact on consumer buying behavior. The purpose of this research is to find out the impact of the existing and emerging trends in digital marketing on consumer buying behavior and up to what extent these trends affect the consumers. This study not only helps in knowing the effectiveness of these trends

but can also help marketers and companies in identifying the existing & emerging trends and what are the strategies that should be adopted by the companies for customer satisfaction and reach. All these trends could help the company to get a competitive edge and be relevant in the market.

Now many trends in digital marketing have been existing for quite some time and are some trends have been picking up recently and are emerging rapidly. Technology is ever-evolving and it is something that neither customers nor companies can ignore. Everybody has to adhere to the technological changes. So the faster the companies get used to these trends, the better competitive edge they can have in digital marketing. Hence is very important for the companies or the marketer to leverage these trends. Many researchers have worked on the current and emerging trends in digital marketing. But very little effort is devoted to studying the impact of various existing and emerging trends of digital marketing on consumer buying behavior. Keep this in mind, the following objectives were framed:

- To understand the existing and emerging trends in digital marketing.
- To understand the impact of existing and emerging trends in digital marketing on
- Consumer buying behavior.

Concept of Online Marketing: Internet has become an essential part of offices, homes, institutions etc. The number of people spends their time online all over the world. Smart marketers keep on top of the scale of change and ensure their marketing strategies and touch point's mirror where the consumer is spending their time. Online marketing has sub sold traditional marketing in recent years and continues to be a high growth industry online marketing connects organizations with qualified potential customers and takes business development to a much higher level than traditional marketing online marketing synergistically combines the internet's creative and technical tools , including design development , sales and advertising . Web is now established as a mass market media channel for the wealthy. Whereas, E - mail has become a mass market media channel for various field. Online marketing is the exchanging values between the seller and buyer and it is done online. Online marketing is also known as Internet marketing, web marketing, digital marketing and search engine marketing (SEM). There are three broad approaches for using the internet to promote ones goods or services that is to provide information about ones product to the indented target market and build brand awareness and equity.

Definitions of online marketing: "Online marketing refers to a set of powerful tools and methodologies used for promoting products and services through the internet" Online marketing refers to advertising and marketing efforts that use the web and e-mail to drive direct sales via electronic commerce " Online marketing can be broken into three specialized areas such as:-

1. Web marketing- Web marketing includes e-commerce websites, affiliate marketing web sites, promotional or informative websites, online advertising on search engines and organic engine results via research engine optimization (SEO).
2. E-mail marketing – E-mail marketing Involves both advertising and promotional marketing efforts via e-mail messages to current and prospective customers.
3. Social media marketing- Social media marketing involves both advertising and marketing efforts via social marketing sites like face book, YouTube, Twitter and Digg.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital marketing is a booming sector in the current scenario. Its relevance has become so important nowadays that the companies cannot afford not to tap into this segment. Digital marketing refers to marketing or promotion done through various digital platforms (A.I. Klimin, D.V. Tikhonov, A.I. Riushenkova, 2018). Digital marketing in the digital allows companies to sell their products & services and also provides them with online customer service.

Digital marketing won't replace traditional marketing, but it can merely complement it, bring better opportunities for the firms to stay in contact with the customer (A.I. Klimin, D.V. Tikhonov, A.M. Efimov, 2017). Amita Chourisya (2017). Nowadays, the value of digital marketing has been realized by businesses in the developing world. To succeed in the business, it has become inevitable for the businesses to integrate traditional and online marketing to cater to the consumer needs more precisely (Parsons, Zeisser, Waitman, 1996). Online marketing is leveraging the unique capabilities of new interactive media to create a new form of interactions and transactions between consumers and marketers.

(Amita Chourisya, 2017) Online marketing leverages the unique capabilities of digital interactive media to generate new types of customer-marketer interactions as well as transactions. In digital marketing, there has been a lot of current/emerging trends, and these trends are very important because these trends play a significant role in attracting customers and these trends also help the company remain competitive in the market. Companies are nowadays trying to leverage all these trends for maximizing their reach, profit, and for increasing brand awareness.

Earlier it was difficult for a small-scale business to grow and reach its potential customers which was majorly due to the high advertisement and marketing cost. It also restricted the small business to limit themselves to a particular geographical location. Due to the emergence of digital marketing, small businesses are also getting an opportunity to market themselves at a low cost. Online marketing has an impressive return on investment (ROI). It is mostly because it gives amazing reach at a low cost. Nowadays, people are also drifting more towards digital platforms rather than the traditional medium.

Based on the literature review the following hypotheses were framed:

H1: The digital marketing trend- content marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H2: The digital marketing trend- Social media marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H3: The digital marketing trend- Search engine marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H4: The digital marketing trend- Email Marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H5: The digital marketing trend- Display Advertising, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H6: The digital marketing trend- Influencer marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H7: The digital marketing trend- Interactive Marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H8: The digital marketing trend- Chatbots, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H9: The digital marketing trend- Visual search has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

H10: The digital marketing trend- Personalization, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research – the type of conclusive research was conducted for achieving the objectives of the study. Data is collected from 136 respondents who were exposed to digital marketing strategies using the online survey method. Because of not having proper information about the target population, the non-probability convenience sampling method was used to select respondents. The online questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire had statements measuring the impact of current and emerging trends of digital marketing. These statements were taken from past research work in a similar area.

Existing trends in digital marketing:

According to the (Content marketing institute, 2015), Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach, which focuses on the distribution and creation of relevant, consistent, and valuable content for attracting as well as retaining a clearly defined audience to drive profitable customer action. Content marketing can be done in a lot of ways like blogs, creating videos, memes, posts, illustrations info graphics, etc. Content marketing is a very smart way of persuading customers without actually promoting a product/service. Many of the companies create such contents that invoke a need in a customer towards buying a product or a service.

Social media is not a new trend in digital marketing, but its popularity and influence have been increasing day by day. Social media is an important digital marketing tool because it lets the company interact and engage with its brand. Social media can be used for creating leads, brand awareness, and sales. Social media is majorly filled with graphical content. In social media, marketers have already understood the graphical content and images are far more successful than the traditional texts for reaching out to their potential customer as well as their communities on social media platforms (Kissane, D., 2016). In social media platforms, marketers have various options for branding within the social media landscape, such as participating as a brand persona in social media platforms, paid advertisements, creating engagement activities for consumer participation, and publishing branded content (Tute n & Solomon, 2013). Talking about social media its main benefits are customer awareness, better SERP ranking, more inbound traffics, higher conversions, more brand authority, improved brand loyalty, cost-effectiveness, and better customer satisfaction.

Search engine marketing is one of the prominent trends in digital marketing and one of the most effective ways to grow a company's online business. Search engine marketing is the marketing practices undertaken by companies/marketers by using paid advertisements on SERPs (Search engine result pages.) search engine marketing requires proper optimization techniques for better ranking and visibility. Visibility has a great impact on customer's purchase decisions. Through effective search engine optimization strategies even the less popular companies can appear ahead of the popular, well-known brands. (Kai H. Lim 2010). Search engine marketing requires proper optimization techniques for better ranking and visibility. Visibility has a great impact on customer's purchase decisions. (Ambuli Velayudham, Surendher Rose 2019), the impact of search engines on the consumer buying decision is linked with higher brand listing and information search. Although the marketing scope has expanded due to the digital mode, most people appear to have a conventional buying behavior and tend to refer to search engines for services or products and informational search that has a higher ranking.

Email marketing is the way of sending commercial emails to a company's potential or existing customers. It is a very simple yet powerful tool of marketing. The reason why Wreden (1999) defined email marketing as the 'Internet's killer application' is because of the precision with which email can be targeted, monitored, and personalized. Companies can market at low costs and digital processing enables the businesses to send out large amounts of emails. Email marketing not only helps in promoting the brand but also helps in personalizing the content. It not only helps you establish direct contact with the customers but it also helps in driving inevitable consumers to your website (Gupta, B., 2019). According to the qualitative research carried out by (Rettie, R., 2002), email marketing would be more beneficial as a retention tool rather than as a customer acquisition tool as its interactivity enables two-way communication. Hence it should be integrated with the overall communication mix of the company. Email marketing can be used as both retention as well as an acquisition tool and it also has a significant impact on the buying behavior of the consumers.

Display advertisings are the graphic advertising that can be seen on websites, social media platforms, or apps. These advertisements have various formats such as images, flash, videos, texts, audio, etc. Display advertising is an important trend because its mere exposure (even without requiring the

customer/user to engage with the advertisement) can attract the consumer attention towards the marketer's product and brand (Ghose, A., & Todri, V., 2015). The main objective of the display advertisements is to create brand awareness. These advertisements help in retaining these advertisements in the mind of customers, which could also trigger the possibility of the user researching about the brands that they saw on the display advertisement. These advertisements are very popular and common and the display ads also help with the conversions done through retargeting.

Online Marketing Strategies

The question now is not whether companies have to market their good online. It is on how they should market their goods online. Just a website showcasing their products does not make a case of marketing online. Anybody with a little technical know-how can immediately setup a website. But, they need to bring in customers to the website. Strategies have to be formulated in order to have a successful presence on the web. It does not matter whether the company is a small one or a larger one. In fact, it is imperative for small businesses to go online so that they can stand up to the larger companies. Developing a successful internet marketing strategy is an essential part of online marketing success. In order to succeed, develop and implement a strategic plan that includes all of the following:

- Develop a Great Product
- Develop a Web Site to sell
- Develop a killer marketing strategy

Each step plays an important role in the overall strategy and must be developed to its fullest potential. If even one step fails, the chances of success will be minimal.

Recent trends in online marketing:

1. Massive increase in product selection – The variety and assortment of goods and services offered for sale on the internet is staggering. Increased transaction efficiency (e.g. 24/7 access, delivery to fulfill their needs more easily and conveniently than ever before. Increase in product selection and availability has exposed marketers to inroads by competitors from every corner of the globe

2. Changing value propositions- The speed and efficiency of the internet has changed the way customers view value .For eg: customers today automatically turn to travel agents for assistance in booking airline tickets, cruises or hotel stays ,but now customers turn to travel sites like Expedia , Travelocity.com or Priceline .com for their travel need ,these services increase value through one – stop shopping and price comparisons.

3. Privacy, security and ethical concern –customers appreciate the convenience of online marketing; they get assurances that their information is safe and confidential.

4. Opportunities for growth- By the internet and other sectors of the new economy can transform old economy companies and provide compelling opportunities for growth.

5. The dot com retailers such as Amazon, web portals like Yahoo! and America online, companies Cisco and 3Com ,Wal-Mart etc are critical to their sourcing and selling ,and service businesses such as Kinko's the chain of print shops are all committed to the new economy in one way or another .

6. The growing penetration of broadband connections, which serve 23 percent of Internet users in Sweden, nearly 50 percent in the United States and stunning 94 percent in South Korea is viable example for online marketing.

8. In 2000 nearly 400 million people worldwide had online access, of which 1/3 were in the US. By 2004 new technologies had made able to receive images and advertisements and provide users with mobile access to the web.

9. Online consumer spending also continues to grow. Books, music electronics and toys, online shopping accounted for as much as 23% of US retail sales in 2002 and online sales were growing at 30 to 40% per year compared to 4% in conventional offline retailing.
10. Online marketing has made the transactions easier, faster and cheaper than offline marketing.
11. Online marketing makes it possible for marketers to reach customers directly without expense or complication of distribution channels, a phenomenon known as disintermediation.
12. There is no extra cost entailed in marketing information, digital goods or services available anywhere one can gain access to the web-literally, global reach, making them available 24 hours per day, 7 days, 52 weeks per year and providing instantaneous delivery.
13. The number of users making online transactions has also grown exponentially and it expected to increase from 11 million in 2011 to 38 million in 2015.
14. Online shoppers are expected to increase from 20 million in 2013 to 40 million in 2016.
15. The syndication of information, the increasing returns to scale of network products, the ability to efficiently personalize and customize market offerings, the ability to disintermediate distribution, global reach, round the clock access and the possibility of instantaneous delivery are the seven potentially attractive elements of online marketing.

Recent Issues in Online Marketing:

1. Power shift to customers: the growth of the internet and the worldwide web has shifted power to customers, not marketers; rather than business having ability to manipulate customers via technology, customers often manipulate businesses because of their access to information and ability to comparison shop.
2. Shifting demand patterns: Customers demand for certain product categories has shifted. The simple fact is that customers prefer to download music from the internet and create their own custom playlist on CD's or MP3 players. The industry claims it has lost millions of dollars in revenue due to the unauthorized downloading of copyrighted material.
3. New sources of competition" in the new economy some of the best competitive stem from partnership and alliances with other firms.
4. Violation of Standards: Many well known and respected companies including Mrs. Field cookies and Hershey Foods have been fined for violating the standards of The Children's Online Privacy Protection Act.
5. Burden of Sales Tax: One important issue involves the collection of Sales Tax for online transactions. In 2003 major retailers including Wal-Mart, Target, and Toys "R" us-is an agreement with a consortium of 38 states and the district of Colombia agreed to collect online Sales Tax.
6. There is no international legal agreement that protects both buyers and sellers in online transactions across national borders.
7. Syndication of information: involves the sale of the same good typically an informational good too many customers who then combine it with information from other sources and distribute it.
8. 77% of internet users employ search engines more frequently as compare to others Eadvertising media such as banner ads, Wweblinks en email links and the leading tool for discovering information about a product or service. 84% of internet users use search engines frequently to discover websites and final products or services and only 55% of internet users are likely to purchase online after searching search listings Vs 9% for banner advertising.

9. The fact is that there are few barriers to entry and many internet strategies are easily imitated. Numerous book retailers are challenging Amazon; e-Bays entry into European markets has made life difficult for QXL and other European online auction businesses.

10. One myth, some companies have bought into that the internet or online marketing is a self service medium.

Data analysis and interpretation:

One sample t-test was used to study the impact of various digital marketing trends on consumer buying behavior. The following table shows the out of hypotheses testing:

Table1: Hypothesis Description

Hypotheses	Mean value	T -value	P-value	Result
The digital marketing trend- content marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.43	4.743	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend- Social media marketing has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.46	5.091	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend- Search engine marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.51	6.525	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend- Email Marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior	3.08	0.845	0.399	Hypothesis is rejected
The digital marketing trend- Display Advertising, has an impact on consumer buying behavior	3.66	8.546	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend- Influencer marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.04	0.443	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend- Interactive Marketing, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.68	8.194	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend- Chatbots, has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.15	1.543	0.125	Hypothesis is rejected
The digital marketing trend- visual search has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.91	11.932	0.000	Hypothesis is accepted
The digital marketing trend personalization has an impact on consumer buying behavior.	3.51	6.111	0.000	

As per the above table, p values for content marketing, social media marketing, search engine marketing, display advertising, influencer marketing, interactive marketing, visual search, and personalization is less than 0.05. So It is inferred that content marketing, social media marketing, search engine marketing, display advertising, influencer marketing, interactive marketing, visual search, and personalization have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior.

As per the above table, p values of email marketing and chat boat is less than 0.05. So, it is inferred that there is no significant impact of email marketing and chatbots on consumer buying behavior.

Findings:

The findings of the study suggest that existing trends such as social media marketing, content marketing, search engine marketing, and display advertising impacts consumer buying behaviour. Whereas emerging trends such as visual search, influencer marketing, interactive marketing, and personalization have a significant impact on consumer buying behavior. Other indications of the findings are that the majority of the respondents believe that social media influences the consumer purchase decisions. The majority of respondents find search engine ads to be relevant and they also agree that display advertisements help in retaining and remembering the brand. Informational content, blogs, posts, etc. are part of content marketing and many people refer to these contents for

making purchase decisions. Emerging trends such as visual searches are gaining a lot of popularity and have a great scope in the upcoming time. Personalized content and display advertising are also preferred by the majority of the respondents. Interactive marketing was not prevalent a few years back but nowadays brands are investing a lot of time in interactive marketing and trying to establish continuous communications with their customers and the majority of the responses also indicate its relevance and preference.

Managerial implications:

Content is king and through this research, it was found that it has a significant impact on the consumers. So the companies and marketers should always focus on providing good content because not only it increases the ranking but it also educates the consumer about the products/services of the company. It is also an excellent off-page SEO optimization technique. A good piece of content would also attract the customer towards the brands offering. Hence content marketing is one of the most important trends of social media.

Through proper search and display advertisement strategies, the marketers and the brands can increase their reach, conversions, and brand awareness. Paid advertisements are very important because they have a better chance of ranking. Getting organic traffic by ranking can be very difficult and time-consuming. Hence paid advertisements should not be avoided by the companies. Social media marketing will remain evergreen as throughout the years the average time spent on social media has been consistently increasing. In social media strategies such as interactive marketing and influencer marketing are gaining momentum. Advertisements on social media are also very beneficial because social media has a large number of users and it is the best platform to advertise. Talking about influencer marketing, companies should majorly focus on strategies that could potentially influence Gen Z and millennial. It is because the majority of the followers of the influencers fall under this category.

Companies should adopt a visual search strategy as early as possible because visual search allows consumers to browse for their desired item and often opens up all the related products that they would prefer. This also saves a lot of time for the consumers. Nowadays companies are also coming up with this feature on their website or application.

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