

Comparative assessment of digital and traditional marketing approaches

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ABSTRACT

With the advancement in the Internet and communication technology, we are seeing a surge in the acceptance of the digital platform as a marketing tool. This surge in adopting the digital marketing tools is largely due to the enormous dynamics in the flexibility and reachability the digital platform offers. Hence we briefly compare the merits offered by the digital marketing approaches with that of traditional marketing tools.

Key words: Digital marketing, print media, traditional marketing, Internet, web marketing, web dynamics, mass marketing

BACKGROUND

Marketing is about reaching and influencing the consumer. The web facilitates this at an amazing scale, efficiency and measurability. It is cost effective, efficient, immediate and convenient approach to globally reach, track and analyze a targeted market without any time restrictions. Web as a marketing medium provides amazing opportunity to build profile and networking to enhance profitability in any business.¹⁻⁸

Web as a marketing medium is location and device independent which offers an enormous potential to reach targeted audience irrespective of local, regional, national and international boundaries. Moreover the ability to reach the consumer at their convenient niche brings valuable marketing strategy into any business with efficiency in advertisement costs.^{1, 5, 9, 10}

Web gives digital marketing a sophisticated and effective way to create a consumer relationship. The interactive engagement of the web based marketing allows the audience to get the marketing message across. Additionally, the real time behavioral information and direct consumer feedback helps improve and optimize interactions.^{3, 5, 10-13}

Summary of the key differences of traditional and digital marketing are highlighted in the table below: Due to limitations in its dynamics, traditional marketing grab audience attention for short time contrary to which digital marketing content can engage the audience for long time as it gives valuable information through variety of channels such as blogs, articles, podcasts, infographics, videos etc.

Traditional marketing offers one-way communication to reach audience with collateral limitations, digital marketing offers marketers to instantly cus-

tomize the experience and have real time communication. This reciprocity among customer leads to big impact in any business. Both features add value and efficiency to digital over traditional marketing.^{1, 3, 5, 9, 10}

In any business it starts with objective, goals to target market with respect to their persona and assess their market potential. Budget, expertise and time are key inputs to build image, reputation, response and public relations.^{1, 5, 14}

Budget must be optimally estimated for marketing and communications expenses, specifically to align with marketing tools (to create, optimize, promote, convert and analyze) and campaigns for positive returns.^{5, 15, 16}

Expertise in digital marketing influences to implement efficient and effective strategies at right time. Knowledge and experience also helps to manage content, design and improve website traffic, enhance social media interactions, which helps to increase visibility in profit, and customer satisfaction. Planning, implementing and monitoring the digital marketing strategies require time and timing. Time is essential to measure and monitor the strategies and align them to the projected period to achieve goals. Digital marketing strategy mainly involve customer reach, acquisition, conversion (act and convert) and retention (long term engagement)

Both traditional marketing and digital marketing have different approaches and have positive qualities to reach target market and to gain profit. By combining traditional and digital marketing methods in the digital strategy, expanded reach through multiple channels, interactivity for increased engagement and to build more personal relationships to retain customers more effectively.^{1, 5, 9, 15, 16}

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Traditional Marketing	Digital Marketing
Grab attention for short time	More relevant and consistent for long time
Expensive and time consuming	Cost effective and time effective
Hard to measure	Easy to measure
It's about impressions, interrupts audience	Creates user experience and gives valuable information
TV, radio, newspapers, magazines	Website, e-mail, mobile, social media

The integrated approaches in marketing strategies have several advantages, some of which are listed below:

Integrated approaches use one channel to support the other and help communicate a unified message.

Integrated approaches help develop clear consistent branding which has potential to gain widespread recognitions.

It offers clear calls for action.

It offers use offline media to drive your potential clients/customers online in order to engage with them regularly.

It provides value/compelling reasons for to engage clients.

Different stages of digital marketing campaigns include analysis, development, implementation and control.^{1,5,6,9} Start with research and analysis to identify current market potential.

Analysis:

SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats) analysis is ideal way to understand your business objectives and current market.

Development:

Objectives, Strategies development to reach, acquire to engage and retain customers.

Implementation:

Tactics, Content, Creative, marketing mix with multiple channels

Control:

Budget, Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

As an example, setting an objective to increase traffic to the site of Garrison Spa and Lodge, campaigns are designed for social media marketing channels like Facebook and Twitter.

SWOT analysis for current web presence:

Strengths:

Quality of service, competitive price offers on long stay, skilled and experienced staff.

Weakness:

Lack of digital marketing strategy and poor market reach.

Opportunities:

To grow digitally, Building relations, to improve customer services

Threats:

New competitors, unavailability for high number of customers.

Development of strategies, approaches and techniques to increase traffic to the website. Integrated traditional and digital channels for cost effective

means of targeted campaigning. Develop campaigns in Facebook and Twitter customers. Develop a content calendar to create, maintain and update around the campaigns for different marketing channels. Implementing tactics in website by keeping simple, clear and easy to find, priced properly for the market, and call to actions (booking/reservations) are clearly outlined. Adding a blog element to the website provides fresh content, photos and innovations to customers. Connect with the targeted customers and former guests, update offers, reply and comment. Request the guests for reviews and recommendations who have visited the hotel. Analyze and evaluate with the available digital tools like google analytics. With the help of internal and external controls evaluate the performance and upgrade the system and service accordingly. Details on the various e-tools available, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each, to include social media marketing, blogs, rich media, email marketing, search engine optimization, online advertising and their application to digital marketing campaigns are vital.

Overview and outline of strengths and weaknesses of:

Social media marketing

It's a consumer generated media (text, visuals and audio forms) created and shared.

Strengths:

Potential to reach broad customers and quick interactions. Useful for branding, raising awareness and increasing sales. Visitors and feedbacks are measurable.

Weakness:

Needs very smart approach to target diversified audience. It is very trendy and can change every day, hence need dynamic research and inputs.

Blogs

Blog is a personal website or web page consisting of an individual record of opinions, links to other sites, etc. on a regular basis.

Strengths:

Raise brand visibility, Reflects individual thoughts and passion. Has followership.

Weakness:

May be biased. Unpredictable trafficking. Skilled writing required.

Rich media

Rich media provides powerful way to convey your message using animation, audio and video. Eg., podcasts, video, and infographics.

Strengths:

Leverage the power of your fans and supporters, more authentic than most corporate video, more attention grab, more powerful than traditional display ads.

Weakness:

May slow down a website due to larger file size, more expensive to create and require higher skillset.

Email marketing

It is a direct marketing tool using electronic means to build relationships with both potential and existing customers.

Strengths:

Cost-effective, highly targeted, can customise on a mass scale and completely measurable, most powerful digital marketing tactics.

Weakness:

Spamming potential. Blocking emails could hurt company's reputation.

Search engine optimisation (SEO)

SEO is the practice of optimising a website in order to rank higher on the search engine results pages. Search engines index search term that is relevant for a product or service.

Strengths:

It is organic (free) tool to reach potential customers and to drive traffic towards website.

Weakness:

SEO is a moving target because of the ever-changing algorithms. Needs constant monitoring and technical expertise.

Online advertising

Online advertising encompasses advertising in all areas of the Internet.

Strengths:

Can be optimised by targeting it to certain geographies and specific markets. It is cost effective, real time and long lasting.

Weakness:

Can expose your message to a countless visitors if not properly targeted. It can be flashy, loud graphics and popups that give negative comments.

Social media platforms and SEO together works well to drive the traffic to the website from small to medium business with low cost.^{1, 5, 6, 9, 10, 17}

Social media marketing:

It will involve creating awareness and drive traffic to website using selected social media channels; create business page/group for targeted customers in Facebook and regularly tweet key events in Twitter. Keep updated with innovative content campaign through active posts, engagement fans through running competitions, photos and videos of hotel and spa, requesting guest reviews, updating hotel events, booking discounts for fans or complimentary food/drink. This is usually done in the form of two-way conversation with customer via the commenting on the postings of customers and the sharing or re-sharing of posts in Facebook and Twitter which inspire call to action. It is also important to include selected social media widget buttons or links in the website home page properly displayed in header, footer or sidebar through Word Press plug in.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) –

SEO is an established primary source to increase website traffic. It gives continuous flow of non-paid and organic targeted traffic to website.

To create SEO campaigns the following steps are involved:

Keyword Research:

Search for the targeted keywords, list the number of related or long tail keywords, identify the most searched and competitive for business using Google keyword planner.

Optimising website:

Include the keywords into website and link with other marketing channels into website with relevant keywords.

Link Creation and building:

The more links on web, the more traffic and visitors to your site. Build links in Facebook and Twitter with potential customers and associates within your industry. Also use local directories submission, link to blog articles and so on.

Analyse and review progress.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No Conflict of Interest to declare

CONCLUSION

We provide here a comparative assessment of digital marketing approach with that and traditional marketing approach, with an additional emphasis on how an optimal digital marketing approach may be developed. Nevertheless the marketing approach adopted should be aligned with the consumer needs.

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