

Analysis On How Digital Marketing Influence Consumer Behaviour

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Abstract:

Digital marketing is a type of marketing strategy that is gaining popularity day by day. Its use is very prominent as well in today's time but not many know how to utilise it to its full potential while ensuring no rules or regulations or concerns are violated as such. For this reason, this research was conducted where the various approaches to digital marketing as whole as well as its opportunities and challenges were explored and how these aspects affect a consumer's buying behaviour was also examined to holistically understand the role digital marketing can play in building or for that matter affecting a brand's reputation along with its customer relationship that further might cast an impact on attracting and retaining clientele.

Introduction

Digital marketing has now become a very prominent and significant part of the marketing strategies adopted by businesses in today's technologically advanced world. Marketing is an aspect of an enterprise and its functioning that enables the brand to address the needs and wants of the customer base their offering pertains to, also referred to as the target audience. Through marketing, brands are also able to create and communicate values that satisfy the consumer need including functions like promotion, pricing, distribution and management of the product or service. Digital marketing, however, is a whole other branch underneath its umbrella, where through extensive use of online platforms such as social media, websites, browsers and more, the business aims to reach out to their customer base where they spend a considerable amount of their day. Utilising this fact as an advantage, brands are able to promote their offering in a cost-effective way as there are no constraints to the data posted online, allowing them to connect to a much larger audience than they would be able to through any other strategy. This form of marketing includes online ad campaigns, interactive interviews posted on the brand's social media page, blogs, information about the upcoming products and more.

Additionally with the technological advancements being introduced frequently in today's era, the algorithm has taken on the burden of connecting with the customer base. The AI assistance in dimensions such as browsers and social media platforms has enabled it to showcase similar and sometimes the exact same product or service, the consumer was exploring by examining the key words and filtering out the choices for them. SEO (search engine optimization) is also a similar concept. Its use has become extremely common nowadays where the brands link their advertisements and reach to the specific key words that their target audience may use when looking for such products. This allows them to connect better by understanding what the customer is looking for and what they need. Even though such marketing efforts provide the business with exposure, they also have impacts on the consumer behaviour which are very important to analyse to ensure their success.

Consumer behaviour relates to the purchasing patterns and actions of the end consumer of a product or

service made available by an enterprise. According to Solomon (2018), consumers increasingly rely on online reviews, social media, and other digital content to inform their purchasing decisions. This shift underscores the importance of maintaining a positive online presence and managing brand reputation effectively. It involves studying the various factors and people that influence the overall purchasing decision of a customer before finalising the transaction. Understanding and analysing consumer behaviour is very important for a business regardless of what stage of their operation they may be at. By digging deep into this aspect, a business is able to differentiate different types of customers present in their target audience and are further able to address their needs and wants better by designing special marketing campaigns for the same, attracting more customers as well. Moreover, studying consumer behaviour closely allows them to gain a competitive edge by examining their and their competitors' strengths and weaknesses in context of buying behaviour of their audience, enabling them to stay relevant in the market. According to Solomon (2018), consumers increasingly rely on online reviews, social media, and digital content to inform their purchasing decisions. This shift underscores the importance of maintaining a positive online presence and managing brand reputation effectively.

Digital marketing as a whole, has various effects on this dimension of an offering. Customers are attracted by a set of qualities that they observe in a product and its said brand but that's not all. Many customers prefer to research before buying, scrutinising the product prior to the final decision of purchasing it and the digital marketing strategies of the brand aid them for that. By looking at the features of the products, the reviews and the brand image and reputation of a particular enterprise, the buying behaviour of the customer is affected. For instance, a product that is viral and has positive reviews will dissolve any restrictions the customer has of buying it and push them over the edge to making their decision. Similarly on the other hand, a product which has not been able to establish a reputable image over the network would indeed encourage the consumer to back off and incline towards another brand or product perhaps.

The concept of digital marketing has also spun another very persistent effect on the consumer behaviour nowadays called as the research online, purchase offline effect where the customers are influenced by the brand's marketing efforts and choose to explore it in a physical setting, providing the brand to gain more footfall and through their communication skills, generate more revenue and establish a connect with their customer base, facilitating a positive and reputed brand image while leaving a footprint into the market of their presence.

1.1 KEY MARKETING STRATEGIES

As digital marketing is a whole other dimension of marketing strategies as such, it encompasses a variety of techniques that allow a business to effectively engage with its target audience.

Primarily, content creation is a very frequently adopted marketing strategy often made available throughout different social media platforms which includes the promotion of aspects of a product or service in an aesthetically pleasing manner as to initially attract customers. Content creation remains a fundamental aspect of digital marketing. According to Pulizzi (2012), creating valuable and relevant content helps attract and retain a clearly defined audience, ultimately driving profitable customer action. High-quality content shared across social media platforms can enhance brand visibility and foster engagement. Furthermore, personalised marketing is also a key diversification of digital marketing wherein brands target existing customers and connect with them on a more personal basis using the data from their purchases to examine their purchasing behaviour and turn them into returning customers

Influencer marketing is another variant of this type of marketing, wherein the brand collaborates with rep-

uted influencers with a significant fan following to endorse their offering. This is very commonly used as influencers play a huge role in affecting a customer's buying behaviour by providing them an overall review of it. Keller and Fay (2012) emphasise that positive WOM can amplify marketing efforts by spreading brand messages organically through consumer networks. This strategy relies on the inherent trust consumers place in recommendations from friends and family, enhancing its impact on purchasing decisions. Word of mouth strategy is something that grows rather naturally out of these marketing efforts; customers explore a product online and after coming across with one that they feel is good enough and satisfies their needs and wants adequately, they tend to recommend it to people they are connected with acting as an advocate agent for the enterprise itself.

1.2 HOW DOES THESE STRATEGIES HELP BUSINESSES & MARKETS

Implementing such strategies in an appropriate manner pertaining to the products and services offered by the brand aids them to effectively and more efficiently reach out to their customer base, creating valuable relations without using much resources, simultaneously contributing to resource optimisation.

Through digital marketing techniques such as content creation, the brand is able to create a visual impact into the subconscious of the viewers due to the informative and aesthetically pleasing graphics that allow it to integrate 'brand recall'; it refers to the phenomenon where, a specific brand instantly comes into the mind of a customer when thinking of a particular object, thing or need. This helps the business to gain an edge in the market establishing its dominance and popularity into the market. By creating different posts using popular themes and humour allows them to cater to the upcoming trends as well to relate better to their target audience.

Moreover, personalised marketing aids the brand to bond with their audience closely, providing a sense of connection and ensuring customer retention and loyalty. Through various methods of it, commonly including push notifications, birthday and anniversary wishes, a trustworthy reputation and relation is set, effectively retaining existing customers and also attracting new ones by showcasing their behaviour towards their customer base. Peppers and Rogers (2016) highlight that personalised marketing can significantly improve customer satisfaction and loyalty by addressing specific needs and preferences, thus enhancing the overall customer experience.

Additionally through other strategies such as influencer marketing and word of mouth, the brand is able to build a good reputation in the market it operates in by using testimonials and review of people, their customer base considers experienced and has faith in regarding a particular type of product before trying it out themselves. According to Brown and Hayes (2008), influencers can sway the purchasing decisions of their followers through endorsements and reviews, making them valuable partners for brands seeking to reach niche audiences. The authenticity and relatability of influencers play a crucial role in this strategy's effectiveness. When using these marketing efforts extensively and appropriately, a brand can integrate itself into its catering market in a very cost effective way whilst leaving a mental footprint on their target audience, enabling it to generate an improved and significant sum of revenue than they would have without the utilisation of such strategies.

1.3 - HOW DOES EXTENSIVE USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING AFFECT TARGET AUDIENCE'S PURCHASING DECISIONS

A lot can affect the purchasing decision of a consumer; reviews and testimonials being a crucial one. It is thoroughly believed that people tend to believe what is shown on the internet to be true for the most part

and it plays a huge role in influencing the slight push they may need to finalise their buying decision which is why it is important to understand how big of an impact a simple review might have to the target audience. For instance, even though a product that might work wonders for a particular type of body, is reviewed by a person that possesses a different type of body might lead to the defaming of the product, simply because it wasn't used in the proper manner but that won't stop the overall reputation of the product from affecting as the review was from an influential entity. This type of situation is an example of how, if not promoted in the appropriate manner, a product can take the position of a 'bad product' in the viewer's mind just because of something they witnessed on the internet.

Similarly, if a famous influencer is seen using a product be it consciously or subconsciously, it tends to gain a reputable image representing its superiority merely because a famous person was seen using it. It is very important to understand how the simple act of reviewing a product or promoting it, structure the initial perception of the offering in different ways. Once examined, it can act as a powerful tool in favour of the brand, aiding it in spreading awareness about it effortlessly and representing its newfound popularity.

1.4 - DOES THE USE OF DIGITAL MARKETING PROMOTE THE RESEARCH ONLINE, PURCHASE OFFLINE

Not every customer is like the other just as well, not every customer believes what they observe online. There are a few specific consumers that like to gain data and research about a product they are trying out for the first time, online using the various informative pieces available and then after finalising their purchasing decision, to visit and explore the brand's environment physically. This allows them to check out the behaviour of the enterprise towards its customers and assess how much they value them.

Furthermore, this also plays a huge role in significant revenue generation for the business as visiting the brand in person enables the consumer to explore the varied product line the enterprise offers, leading to the purchase of more products that the customer initially intended to, promoting impulse buying, improving the average order value. The content that is shown on various online platforms for a particular brand is very important to evaluate as that is what initially attracts consumers to take a look at the newly launched product or spread awareness about an existing one. If a customer is not able to find enough data online about a particular product that interests them, then it is a huge possibility that they might end up going for a brand which does provide adequate data before making the effort to physically go to a store as to ensure that their time is not wasted by going for a brand that doesn't disclose enough details about its offerings.

2. LIMITATIONS

While digital marketing is used prominently due to the benefits it offers, it also carries certain disadvantages along with, to whom, if not paid enough attention and worked to minimise its impact, can place the brand at a risk. The uncontrollable nature of online content is another significant challenge. Hennig-Thurau and Walsh (2003) highlight that negative reviews and feedback can quickly spread on digital platforms, potentially damaging a brand's reputation. Brands must be proactive in managing their online presence and responding to customer concerns to mitigate these risks.

Primarily, due to increased awareness about privacy concerns mainly on social media platforms, the reach gets limited as more and more people are understanding the use of their data being collected and assessed for digital marketing campaigns, many tend to block ads and prevent the data tracking as well. Despite its

advantages, digital marketing presents several challenges. Tene and Polonetsky (2012) address privacy concerns, which have become more pronounced with the increasing use of personal data in marketing campaigns. Consumers are becoming more aware of how their data is being used, leading to greater scrutiny and regulatory pressure on businesses to protect consumer privacy.

Moreover, the biggest disadvantage of digital marketing is that the brand cannot control the content that is being spread related to their offerings, which can include positive as well as negative reviews, followed by concerns raised by the customers regarding the brand itself. A single negative review against the brand or its product can very easily lead to viral backlash, casting a huge hit on the brand's image and reputation before the brand even gets a chance to respond, deterring potential customers. Another impact of this issue is misinterpretation of the information or content shared with the audience, that is as the brand has not control over how the viewer perceives the information, it can lead to misinterpretation of the brand's message and values.

Furthermore, it is very important to understand what type of marketing efforts pertain to the offered product or service because digital marketing is not suitable for all products and services offered by a variety of businesses out there. It can be due to various factors such as certain legal and regulatory restrictions imposed for the particular offering or the product being complex, which can arise issues in communicating the features of the product and what it is trying to solve or improve and might require detailed explanations for effective communication which is not exactly possible through digital marketing. It can also be due to the type of target audience the business is catering to as everyone is still not comfortable with technology due to which, it would be a challenge for the enterprise to connect with their target audience through online platforms.

Similarly, sample bias during the market research for a product or service and its revelation on online platforms can lead to a significant chunk of the customer base for the brand to deter and switch to a more inclusive brand for which the market research was somewhat better and were actually able to collect data for different segments of target audience appropriately instead of selecting groups of population of the customer base that doesn't accurately enough represents the particular distinction in the target audience. For instance, if a brand that produces cushion foundation for different skin tones used the reference of a brown skin toned women to produce the product for a range of dark skin women as well, the product won't fit into their needs and influencers can spread this information through their testimonials of testing the product and showcasing the difference leading to a whole community of dark skin women, switching or not trying the brand's product at all, in exchange of a better and more inclusive brand offering similar product in various shades that do pertain to their needs.

In addition, the algorithm of the particular online platform also plays a huge role. As the brand cannot control it as such, it is a possibility that outdated content is reaching out to the customers or better yet, very less or no content for that product or service is reaching out to a customer on an online platform that very well fits into the criteria of target audience for the brand. This can lead to customer disappointment due to bidding confusions about the brand's offerings and values, due to algorithm inconsistency, affecting the brand's customer engagement.

RESULT

Overall, digital marketing is a very beneficial tool when used in all its strengths and some light is also thrown onto the weak points that affect the enterprise and working onto minimising its impact. Even though there are various types of digital marketing prevailing nowadays, it is very important to understand

which form of it is the most suitable and appropriate for your product to ensure effective communication and prevent misinterpretation.

In addition, while adopting digital marketing as a frequently used marketing effort, it is crucial to take into consideration the privacy concerns of the customers along with ensuring that the tone and language of the content shared is easily comprehensible and not offensive to anyone in any matter.

Moreover, it is important to understand that the information being shared online with the potential customers doesn't include any fake claims or evidence which plays a huge role in influencing the purchasing decision of a consumer as if caught, it can cast a big impact on the brand's reputation and stance in the market while leading to a decline in market share as well.

It is crucial to understand the impact the limitations of digital marketing has on the business itself while also controlling it. As awareness and concern regarding privacy and its maintenance amongst the present customer base and if violated can put the business into a huge risk shadowing a hit onto the reputation of it giving the consumers an impression that their data for nefarious uses rather than for research basis.

In addition, as the brand cannot control whatever is being spread on the internet about their offerings, it can lead to misinterpretation of the brand's values and messages building confusion in their customer base which can result in customer's switching to different brands which are way more clear about their intentions and seem more suitable for them.

Furthermore, as discussed, digital marketing is not ideal for all types of product offerings, due to a number of barriers, a prominent one being the uncomfortableness and illiteracy towards technology that still pertains in majorly lucrative consumer groups which are not that fluent in using technology for regular purposes. Not being able to connect with the target audience appropriately due to such barriers can limit the brand's reach and affect their rapport with their consumers affecting the overall efficiency of the enterprise. For short term, it affects the sales whereas in the long run, it can have a significant impact on the brand's reputation in the market due to not being able to communicate their offerings and their solution to their audience appropriately.

Similarly, it is imperative to comprehend and implement various ways to prevent sample bias when conducting market research as once, this information is brought in front of the consumers, they start to realise how the brand is not suitable for their needs acting as a push factor for them to start utilising products of a brand which actually pertains to their needs instead of just claiming to do so and this weakens the enterprise's credibility along with its perception. In order to minimise or reduce the effect these shortcomings have, there are a few steps that can be followed by the brand to ensure that their profile isn't impacted.

Primarily, to ensure that the privacy of the targeted customer base isn't violated, the brand can ask their consumers if they would like to have their data used for research purposes and more. This affirmation from them would allow them to establish how responsible and considerate the enterprise is towards their consumers and that the data is being used for their betterment only. Moreover, to ensure clarity about the brand's messages, the content that is created in order to be spread across various platforms can be simplified yet made aesthetically pleasing, attracting customers while also ensuring that the information is comprehensible by laying out them in bullet points and other types of layout that guarantees the messages to be spread are effectively communicated.

Likewise, to ensure that if not through online platforms, the brand is able to reach and connect with its target audience, thorough research can be done on the customer base and the places where they are significantly present can be identified and the marketing efforts can be deviated towards that direction to

ensure that the brand is able to communicate well and in a suitable manner with its customer base and no restrictions from the consumers is present for the brand to convey its messages.

In continuation, to prevent sample bias, market research is very important to be conducted in the appropriate manner. It is important to identify individuals or aspects that pertain to the specified diversity in the target audience to ensure that reliable data is collected that will allow the brand to produce successful products that fit into all the needs of their consumers.

DISCUSSION:

While collating the research paper as such, I faced certain restrictions as a 12th grade student. Mainly was the difficulty in collecting credible data from various research papers and more that pertain to my chosen topic. In addition, as there wasn't enough information related to a dimension of the digital market, I was initially interested in exploring, I had to go on with a more broader topic as to ensure that I have enough reliable data to refer to in terms of it.

To sum up everything that has been mentioned so far, digital marketing is a cost effective tool that can be used by existing or emerging businesses to expand the reach and promote customer engagement within their target audience. Due to prominent presence of consumers in today's time spread across various different online platforms, digital marketing is a type of marketing effort that allows a struggling or an expanding business to leverage this aspect and promote their product offerings and their values amongst a wide array of consumers, effectively communicating the problem they are trying to solve and attracting more customers than they would have through any other type of marketing.

Moreover, due to the two-way nature of it, through digital marketing the business is also able to strengthen their customer relationships, embodying a sense of connection within their consumer base, ensuring retention due to the influence on their final buying decision. As the customer can effectively judge which brand and its product suits their needs better by assessing their offerings and its features through the content shared on online platforms, a push factor is generated that ultimately aids them in finalising which brand to go to. As the sharing of content on such platforms is free, except for advertisements and endorsements, many brands can take advantage of it and produce content that can go viral, leaving a mental footprint on the minds of the viewers, creating an image in the market, efficiently promoting their products and services while encouraging customer acquisition and retention as well.

The suggestion for the future researchers and researches is that if possible, then to delve into the different types of psychological behaviours behind digital marketing and how it plays a huge role in promoting a product better and allowing the brand to edge themselves into the minds of their customer base. Through specific researches as such, it will be beneficial for future researchers as well to understand the myriad of approaches to digital marketing and the whole thought process behind it that allows an enterprise to appeal better to its target audience.

In conclusion, digital marketing can be implemented in various ways but it is very important to understand which one is more cost effective as well as lucrative as in, it helps in attracting more and more consumers as such along with identifying which approach suits better to the brand's product offering as to effectively communicate its features and more, leaving little to no room for misinterpretation of any content.

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