

The Most Effective Digital Marketing Strategies & Approaches: A Review of Literature

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Abstract- The rise in popularity of organizations integrating technology into their marketing strategy, directs attention to the need for an in-depth review of digital marketing strategies. Making a strategic shift to client-centered marketing strategies, provide businesses the opportunity to engage in a new era of innovative marketing practices, that use digital marketing to meet their primary marketing requirements. A literature review of the most effective digital marketing approaches, provide companies with valuable tools to target a larger audience, using a combination of emerging technologies and some aspects of traditional marketing. The present study provided individuals, companies, organizations, businesses and researchers, with digital marketing strategies to increase visibility to their target market.

Index Terms- Marketing, Business, Digital Marketing, Advertising, Internet Marketing

I. INTRODUCTION

The implementation of digital marketing into business strategy has become a more regularly used strategy. Gaikwad & Kate (2016) noted that marketing has always been around. Zimmer (2017) stated that “marketing is concerned with a relationship called an exchange relationship (p.1).” Digital marketing is a strategy that provides an individual or organization the ability to reach clients by establishing innovative practices, combining technology with traditional marketing strategies.

Roberts & Micken (2015) explained that society has experienced an economical shift, driven by digital technology. Roberts & Micken (2015) cited Dean et al. (2012) discoveries of a 4.7% gross domestic product contribution to the United States (U.S.) economy in 2010. The noted growth in 2010 is expected to continue at more than 10% per year. Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) expressed that digital marketing has become innovative phenomena. The new strategy helps organizations achieve their marketing goals through establishing a link between customization and mass distribution. There are a considerable number of professionals that hold to the ideology of McCarthy, which views marketing utilizing the 4P model: product, place, promotion and price. The traditional marketing strategy used by McCarthy is a powerful, credible and widely-recognized foundational strategy, but leaves no role to the consumer.

Smith (2011) cited Internet World Stats (2010), which pointed out that the world’s internet user population was projected to exceed 2 billion by 2010. With the rapid advancement of technology in society, the adoption of digital marketing strategy is more important than ever. Armitage (2015) explained that digital stratagem should be the cornerstone of an organization “go to” market strategy. These thoughts are echoed by González Romo, García-Medina & Plaza Romero (2017), which explained that new technologies have forced companies to reconsider marketing strategies. The authors continued to explain that the implementation of technology into marketing would help marketing professionals reach a younger audience that heavily use mobile devices on a regular basis. The views of Slade (2016) regarding a link between the implementation of innovative technology and marketing strategy concurred Armitage (2015) and González Romo, García-Medina & Plaza Romero (2017), by proving insight that technology is rapidly developing and will take businesses out of there comfort zone.

A marketing strategy that use technology to enhance an organization’s ability to obtain more exposure starts with a sound strategy. Longo (2016) concurred with these thoughts by expressing that strategy in digital marketing must be prioritized. The President of EDventure Holding Inc., Esther Dysan, explained that the internet is not just an additional sales or advertising method, but has become a tool that has essentially revamped the way that an organization does business. The President of EDventured continued to express that digitalization is projected to have exponential growth in the future (Patruti Baltes, 2016).

Client-focused Strategy

Maximization of organization-to-client exposure must by a primary marketing goal of an organization that seeks to successfully make contact with prospective customers. Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) explained that the traditional production focused paradigm was challenged some years later by Lauterborn’s user-centered model. The new model made a shift in focus from the attention being on production to the user. The thoughts regarding user-centered marketing strategy is resonated by Patruti Baltes (2016), which further elaborated on digital marketing’s role in ensuring that the focus remains on the consumer. The scholar of the Transylvania University of Brasov voiced similar concerns of those expressed by Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016), by elucidating that the attention given to the customer essentially has been “dethroned” by excessive focused being placed on the product.

II. PURPOSE

In a literature review composed by Eryigit (2017), a need for further research regarding marketing in specific areas was identified. The purpose of this present study is to examine digital marketing's best practices. This research paper provided a more in-depth, comprehensive examination of effective digital marketing strategies.

III. RESEARCH QUESTION

In this research paper, the following research question was posed:

RQ: What digital marketing strategies are most effective in maximizing business to perspective-client exposure?

IV. METHOD

Badke (2017) expressed that the literature review is an effective method in revealing what has been complete on a topic. This method provides a rationale for more study on an issue and grounds to move the entire subject forward. The literature review was selected to evaluate the research question. A random selection of academic journals, articles and research publications were selected from various sources. The selection of professional publications were thoroughly reviewed. The findings were displayed using written explanations.

V. RESULTS

Market research (2017) informed that the internet's expansion has had a meaningful, tremendous impact on the marketing of customer goods. A review of the literature displayed a direct, solid connection between marketing and technology.

Website

The literature displayed the importance of adding a website into an organization's marketing efforts. Peck (2012) noted in an article that an investment in a website for newspaper companies is beneficial. The Newspaper Association of American (NAA) explained that 63% of adult newspaper readers visited a newspaper website. With more than half of the newspaper readers visiting their online site, a report from the company's 2011 4th quarter, averaged 111 million website visitors. Vien (2015) explained that an organization could build a website as a marketing tool for free or low price. The website also needs to have a professional look as explained by Vein (2015), citing statistics from a Hinge survey that 30% of clients ruled out small firms that have poorly constructed websites.

Social Media Marketing

A plethora of sources (Gaikwad & Kate, 2016); Kingsnorth, 2017; Patrutiu Baltes, 2016; Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán, 2016; Slade, 2016; Vien, 2015; Wienclaw, 2017; Zimmer, 2017) within the body of literature points to Social Media Marketing as being a powerful marketing tool. Social networking through an online community allows users to communicate with each other. The social networking platform allows marketing between individuals or organizations to be facilitated through online information post and messaging (Zimmer, 2017). Wienclaw (2017) cited Kaplan & Haenlien (2010) definition of social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow creation and exchange of user-generated content (p.4)." Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) commented in his work that social media is an amazing method used to establish communication between members through dynamic exchanges. Gaikwad & Kate (2016) elaborated on the importance of social media in marketing by drawing an adjacent link between social media and word of mouth marketing. Patrutiu Baltes (2016) cited Bafton (2012) recollection per Fleishman-Hillard, that 79% of consumers follow or like their brands on social media. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest were named by Patrutiu Baltes (2016), as well-known and regularly-used social media platforms. Slade (2016) gave insight that companies benefit from setting aside a social media marketing budget, to finance using premium services offered on social media.

E-mail Marketing

The literature review revealed that a digital marketing strategy called E-mail marketing. Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) defined E-mail marketing as an online system, using e-mail to distribute announcements and commercial information. E-mail marketing is a strategy that allows a business or organization to reach a large customer-base through the distribution of messages and information using an electronic messaging tool (Zimmer, 2017). Weinclaw (2017) pointed out that theoretically, E-mail marketing is a simplistic concept. The distribution of coupons, online newsletters, promotional events and advertising materials are among methods of email marketing. Gaikwad & Kate (2016) brought the term E-mail marketing into focus, by presenting thoughts that every E-mail directed toward a prospective customer could be viewed as email marketing.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

The implementation of the websites into an organization's marketing approach is strategic. There is another layer of innovative strategy that marketers use to enhance the visibility of websites on the internet among search engines called Search Engine Optimization (SEO). Wienclaw (2017) defined SEO as "the process of increasing the probability that a website will be listed in the results of an online search and that it will be placed prominently in the search results (p.4)."

An overabundance amount of literature supports SEO as being a credible, established strategy in digital marketing (Gaikwad & Kate, 2016; Gifford, 2010; Kingsnorth, 2017; Patrutiu Baltes, 2016; Piñeiro-Otero, Teresa & Martínez-Rolán, Xabier. 2016). Some SEO strategies noted by Weinclaw (2017), include: adjustment of website content, addition of keywords, proper website indexing and ensuring that site content is unique. Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) indicated that 88% of the worldwide access of the web goes through the Google search engine. Gaikwad & Kate (2016) stated that SEO is a must for online marketing.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is an approach used in digital marketing. Wienclaw (2017) explained SEM as being an avenue of internet-marketing, that targets prospective customers that enter keywords into their search. This is a simplistic, but powerful strategy that use keywords to direct the user directly to an organization or business. The literature points to hyperlinks and banner ads as tools that individuals and organizations use to maximize their marketing. Advertisements online are available for purchase for companies to use for a period. The overall goal is for the advertisement to be used as a directional tool to drive traffic to a business' website. Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) identified Google AdWords and Bing Ads as being popular SEM advertisement tools.

Digital Public Relations

The dissemination of information pertaining to a corporation or organization is a vital marketing technique. A considerable number of sources support Digital Public Relations a well-rounded, dependable avenue of marketing. (Gifford, 2010; Gould, 2017; Patrutiu Baltes, 2016). Public relations are a type of formal communications, that is aimed to foster public acceptance, consideration and support (Gould, 2017). The main goal of Digital Public Relations is to provide information to the public using the internet. Digital Public Relations as expressed by Gifford (2010), ventures beyond the traditional ways of public relations described by Gould (2017), through invoking powerful internet technology to reach a larger, more diverse audience. This incredible approach is used to distribute company information, names of management officials, product information, investor information, organization history and a variety of extra information.

Online Advertising

Patrutiu Baltes (2016) and Gaikwad & Kate (2016), articulated the importance and relevance of online advertising. Patrutiu Baltes (2016) cited Veges & Grigore (2009) description of online advertising as advertising exhibited on the internet, having comparable suggests as traditional advertising, but implementing the usage of communication and interactive tools with the target audience defined to the digital environment. The literature expressed that the most widely used instrument in online advertising is a tool called an online advertising banner. Dissimilar to traditional advertising, Patrutiu Baltes (2016) noted that online banners are usable in a variety of electronic platforms. These platforms include emails, websites, blogs and social channels.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems

Patrutiu Baltes (2016) referenced a survey by Cretu & Gramada (2008), expressing that the main motivation found in the U.K. for using Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications was to improve relationships with clients. The findings of Patrutiu Baltes (2016), concluded that CRM and digital marketing are connected. The goal of CRM, using digital application, is to ensure that the strategy is client-centered. Further benefits of CRM as a part of a digital marketing strategy is market research and retaining clients.

Content Marketing

The body of research displayed several publications, supporting Content Marketing as being a widely-accepted, trustworthy digital marketing practice (Gaikwad & Kate, 2016; Kingsnorth, 2017; Patrutiu Baltes, 2016; Slade, 2016; Vein, 2015). Most of the literature pointed to using blogs as being the main platform for content marketing. Slade stated that "Engaging visual content means that a user is likely to spend more time on your website (p.38)." Patrutiu Baltes (2016) expressed that blogs posted to an organization's website has a significant part in expressing the company's image. The expressions of Slade (2016) and Vein (2015), provided online articles, presentations, live streaming, pictures and videos as beneficial tools that companies should include into their blogs on their business website.

Affiliate Marketing

The Senior Online Marketing Manager of BSKyB and the Internet Advertising Bureau, Helen Southgate, endorsed affiliate marketing as a trustworthy strategy to generate revenue online for a business of any size. (Patrutiu Baltes, 2016). Affiliate marketing is a type of marketing practice in digital marketing, where the affiliates are rewarded by the web-based merchant, via each customer brought through the affiliate's marketing exertions (Patrutiu Baltes, 2016 cited Afiliere, 2008). The findings of Patrutiu Baltes (2016), explained that Pay Per Click (PPC) affiliate programs and affiliate networks were ways that affiliate marketing strategies are practiced through the online environment.

Newsletters

Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016) pointed to newsletters as being an effective marketing strategy for companies to implement into their marketing efforts. The authors expressed the value of a well-designed newsletter with good content. Gaikwad & Kate (2016) concurred with the thoughts of Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016), by elaborating on the significance of newsletter being used in digital marketing. The addition of professionally crafted pictures and videos into an electronic newsletter, will result in 50% to 70% more clicks than newsletters constructed purely using text.

Display Advertising

Patrutiu Baltes (2016) cited the data provided by Woodstream (2016), that Google Display Networks contacts 90% of global internet users, using visual banner-style advertisements. Display advertising is a powerful, influential strategy that organizations use to reach target audiences. This method of advertising focus on using graphics, videos, pictures, logos, text and other similar tools to convey its organization's message. This technique also used a unique identifier of the user's specific computer called cookies to track the number of users visiting their site. The user visitation data can be used to help a company understand the amount of user visiting their site and leave without making a purchase. The insight gained from this method provides the company or marketing team valuable data, that can be used to later retarget the user that left without making a purchase. (Kingsnorth, 2017; Patrutiu Baltes, 2016).

VI. CONCLUSION

The goal of this research paper was to examine the best digital marketing strategies, through a thorough, in-depth review of literature. This present study revealed several digital marketing strategies that are useful to companies, businesses, non-profits, educational facilities and other professional areas. The literature pointed clearly in the direction of combining technology with many aspects of traditional marketing ideology. The clear difference between traditional marketing and digital marketing as discussed by Piñeiro-Otero & Martínez-Rolán (2016), is the strategic shift between the focus being placed on the customer; as opposed to the product.

The body of research pointed to engineering and implementation of a website and use of the internet in digital marketing as being a key resource in digital marketing. Gould (2017) concurred that the internet is a main venue that companies use to market products and services and noted the cost-to-benefit difference between traditional and digital marketing (Gould, 2017 cited Alba et al, 1997 & Peterson, Balasubramanian & Bronnenberg, 1997). Having a website and using the internet acts as a platform to a plethora of strategies identified in the literature. These strategies include: SEM, SEO, E-mail Marketing, Online Ads, E-Newsletters Digital Public Relations, Affiliate Marketing and Content Marketing.

Kingsnorth (2017) shared that digital marketing and business strategy are concepts that should be integrated and grow together. Further research into specific digital marketing strategies, would be a valuable contribution to the field of digital marketing and current body of work. In-depth, qualitative and quantitative analysis would provide supporting evidence of the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of specific strategies. Further comparative studies between traditional marketing and digital marketing would give researchers and companies a better understanding of differences between the two approaches. Digital marketing is an innovative, influential contribution to the field of marketing.

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