

Blending traditional and digital marketing

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Abstract: *It is a matter of fact that we are in the digital era and internet marketing and social media have a significant impact on the way consumers behave, companies do business and it is a must for companies to adapt to the new reality. Due to the fast evolution of the technology, the continuous increase in demand and supply, the supply chain elongation and the big amount of data, the only solution to face the major changes is the automation of all the processes. But even though the new era of communication is here, specialist suggest that companies should not ignore traditional methods, and to try to blend digital marketing with traditional campaigns in order to achieve their goals.*

Key-words: *digital marketing, traditional marketing, inbound marketing*

1. Introduction

Marketing is everything a company does to place its product or services in the hands of potential customers. In order to do this better than the competition they must know everything about their customers from what their need is and how they can satisfy it, to what need can they further create.

In order to be successful, the companies need to maintain a very good relationship with their existing customers and to know their future need even before they know it. The focus nowadays is to sell as much as one can to a customer, focusing on the existing customers while acquiring new ones and treating them as individual persons and not as a target group. The amount of big data coming from everywhere, starting with the website, social media or direct calls helps companies to know their customers, to do analysis and forecasting. But in order to use wise these big amount of data, companies need to automate their marketing processes through marketing automation tools.

Brand awareness and customer retention may rise if companies become more aware of the potential blending both digital and traditional marketing campaigns.

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2. The digital marketing concept

“The practice of promoting products and services in an innovative way, using primarily database-driven distribution channels to reach consumers and customers in a timely, relevant personal and cost-effective manner is known in the theory and practice as digital marketing” (Wsi, 2013)

Digital marketing is a blanket term for the targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing of goods or services using digital technologies in order to reach and convert leads into customers and preserve them. The main objective is to promote brands, shape preference and boost sales through several digital marketing techniques.

Alternative terms for digital marketing are often: 'online marketing', 'internet marketing' or 'web marketing'. The fundamental concept in digital marketing is based on the inbound marketing approach or generally it's called customer centric approach.

Inbound marketing means to promote a business through blogs, podcasts, video, eBooks, newsletters, whitepapers, SEO, physical products, social media marketing, and other methods of content marketing which serve to interest customers through the different stages of the purchase funnel. Inbound marketing means marketing activities that bring visitors in, earning the attention of consumers, making the business easy to be found, and also drawing customers to the website by generating stimulating content (Halligan, 2009).

As long as technology continues to advance, digital marketing will as advance as well. Digital marketing is similar to traditional advertising, but the main difference is in the use of digital devices.

2.1. Digital marketing's advantages

- **Cost efficiency:** compared to traditional mass media marketing, digital marketing has much lower cost and in many cases websites can generate traffic even for free.
- **Interactivity:** the online users can choose when to initiate contact and for how long.
- **Empowering effect** One of advantages of online marketing is related with its enabling effect especially on small businesses since “internet can extent market reach and operational efficiency of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)” (Dholekia, 2004).
- **Infinite audience:** a web for example can reach an entire globe, but if necessary it is also possible to tailor a digital campaign to reach a local net.
- **Duration:** online information is permanently available.

- Active users approach: the offered online content is offered to users on an ongoing basis, and they choose to consume it or not (Wsi, 2013)
- Dialogue with and among users: online marketing allows collaboration between users and gives the right to free expression of their opinion regarding the product /service.
- Rich content: digital marketing offers practically unlimited content and also the possibility to easily update the content when necessary.
- Easy measurable: digital technologies allow the measuring of impact much easier than traditional marketing.
- Adaptable: It is easy to change online content based on users feedback (Varbanova, 2013)
- Personalized: digital marketing is able to create offers and programs that can be customized or personalized based on the profiles or consumer behavior and their preferences.

2.2. Disadvantages of digital marketing

- The copyright: internet marketing campaigns can be easily copied by a competitor. Trademarks or logos can be used to defraud customers.
- Difficulties may appear in case of slow internet connections, if the web sites are too complex or too large, it may take too much time and eventually customers can get bored.
- The e-commerce doesn't allow the user "to touch" the merchandise before purchasing it.
- Other factor is the payment: many users still don't trust in the electronic methods of paying and give up buying online because of this.
- The lack of trust of the users because of the big number of frauds regarding virtual promotions. Honest companies may be affected since their image and reputation of quality can suffer damage.
- The cash on delivery system: which doesn't guarantee the 100% purchase of the product. This is a disadvantage because there are many cases when users with false identities order online with no real intention of picking and paying for the goods.
- Internet marketing is not yet embraced by all people: some customers, especially older ones still don't trust digital environment, preferring to use the traditional methods.
- Internet marketing is highly dependent on technology which can be prone to errors
- The use of digital media marketing strategies can take some time to obtain measurable success (Safko, 2009).

2.2. Measuring digital marketing success

One important aspect is the return on investment (ROI) from any digital marketing campaign. To understand what the ROI is, we need to understand what the goals or aims of the company are, what they wish to get from a digital marketing campaign and then measure these goals.

To be able to find out the company must look at the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the goals for each one.

Types of key performance indicators are the following:

- General Performance - Traffic, leads, reach
- Channel Based - Website, blog, social networks, search engines
- Source based performance - Direct traffic, Organic search, referrals, email, PPC
- Campaign based performance - Lead generation, click through, conversions, conversion rates (Safko, 2009).

3. Traditional marketing

Longevity is the main reason why people are accustomed to traditional marketing.

Finding ads in magazines and newspapers, or reading billboards are still familiar activities and people still do them all the time. In most of the cases traditional marketing is reaching a local audience even though it is not limited to one.

There are many facets of traditional marketing and examples might include tangible items such as business cards, print ads in newspapers or magazines. It can also include posters, commercials on TV and radio, billboards and brochures. Traditional marketing is anything except digital means to brand your product or logo., it is considered “outbound marketing“ and it means buying attention,^[1] cold-calling, direct paper mail, radio, TV advertisements, sales flyers, spam, telemarketing and traditional advertising.

3.1. Advantages of traditional marketing

- Faster results: traditional marketing may produce results that are faster or more effective if the ads are placed well and suitable to the targeted audience, compared to digital marketing methods that can take several weeks to produce effects.
- Durability: some offline materials are often more durable than the online ones, many sites are in reality abandoned.
- The level of trust: may be higher for traditional marketing, and it can be said this is number one advantage. Many people are still trusting more the offline

buying and also because of the high number of frauds that occur in the online environment, people are reluctant to trust some of the information.

3.2. Disadvantages of traditional marketing

- Difficulties in measuring: the results are not easily measured, and in many cases cannot be measured at all.
- High costs: traditional marketing is in most of the cases much more expensive than digital marketing.
- Static: with traditional marketing there is no much interaction with the audience if any in many cases. It means throwing information in front of people and hoping that they decide to take action.
- Timing: in this case companies use static text or advertising commercial to promote the product/service. If changes occur the content can not be changed fast enough.
- Customization: when using traditional marketing methods for advertising it is hard to target a specific customer. Segments of the market can be targeted, but not an individual. For example, an ad may target young women. In comparison digital marketing techniques can track a viewer fields of interest and suggest similar products.
- Pricing options: in traditional marketing it is difficult to offer complex pricing, meanwhile in online marketing the information can explain all the different pricing variations that may appeal to buyers.

4. The balance between traditional marketing and digital marketing

It is no doubt we live in a digital era and the use of internet has increased and still growing as statistics show. The world has transitioned into a very digital environment.

There is a continuous debate on whether digital marketing is overpowering and surpassing traditional marketing or not. Many analysts think that digital marketing has taken over and traditional marketing has lost his importance. But others consider that traditional marketing is still very much used and digital marketing is combining very well with it.

A recent study conducted in 2015 by ZenitOptimedia shows that in the last five years the use of internet has grown a lot and on the other hand the use of other media has decreased or just slightly grow. The situation states as follows: Internet (+105%), Outdoor (+3%), Television (-8%), Cinema (-11%), Radio (-15%), Magazines (-23%), Newspapers (-31%).

The same study made by ZenitOptimedia reveals that in average people spend over 490 minutes daily using some sort of media but what is still surprising is that television remains dominant, representing approximately 3 hours of daily media consumption, while internet is on second place. But the trend shows a decrease for television, while internet has constantly growing. The biggest increase in the use of internet has been among young adults, with time spent online almost tripling in the past 10 years, fuelled by increasing use of tablets and smartphones. Older people may seem to still prefer to spend their time on more traditional media channels like television or radio and in consequence they are still consumers of traditional marketing.

5. Conclusions

Even though few years ago the era of traditional marketing was predicted to come to it/s end, studies show that this is not true. It is true that the use of internet is constantly growing and also the amount of time people spend on online. In conclusion the best solution for o company when it comes to the efforts for increasing visibility on the market, as well as for rising brand awareness is to try to make a combination of the two strategies. On one hand there is the mature group of customers used and attached to the traditional marketing items, who still spend time on television, radio, reading magazines, and on the other hand as statistics show, the young population which tend to spend more and more time online.

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