

Digital pioneering: Navigating social media to expand customer reach.

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INTRODUCTION

In the digital age, social media and digital platforms offer powerful tools for businesses to connect with a wider audience. With the use of targeted advertisements, creation of compelling content, influencers collaboration, and fostering online communities, companies can extend their reach and attract new customers. Analysing data allows businesses to refine their marketing strategies, increasing interaction and conversion rates across various online platforms. Coordinating efforts across different channels helps maintain a cohesive brand image and connect with diverse customer segments. Ultimately, leveraging social and digital media effectively enables businesses to expand their customer base and enhance brand presence in the competitive digital landscape.

2. Historical Context of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing in the early 1990s took off with the creation of the Archie search engine which indexed FTP sites. By the 1980s computers had sufficient storage capacity to handle vast amounts of customer data, leading companies to embrace the usage of online techniques like database marketing instead of relying solely on list brokers. Databases transformed how companies interacted with customers by enabling more effective tracking of customer information. (Desai, 2019)

During the 1990s, the term "digital marketing" emerged alongside advancements in server-client architecture and the proliferation of personal computers. This era marked the significance of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) applications in marketing technology, with vendors introduced comprehensive software solutions covering marketing, sales, and service. The advent of the Internet enabled marketers to own online customer data through CRM software, leading to introduction of the first clickable banner ad in 1994 by AT&T. (Desai, 2019)

In the 2000s, the proliferation of Internet users and the introduction of smartphones such as the iPhone shifted consumer behaviour towards online research and decision-making. Consequently, this prompted marketers to integrate digital technology into their market development strategies. Marketing automation emerged in 2007 as a response to these shifting dynamics in the evolving marketing landscape, enabling companies to automate marketing processes, segment customers, launch multichannel campaigns, and provide tailored content based on user activities. However, despite its advantages, some

companies encounter challenges to effectively implement marketing automation into their daily operations. (Nerhu arts and science college, 2021)

3. Social networking for customer growth simpler strategy for success.

Social networking websites provide platforms for individuals, businesses and organizations to connect and form online communities. Through interactions with companies on these platforms, users can experience direct and customised interactions, which are often more engaging than traditional marketing methods. (Nerhu arts and science college, 2021)

Furthermore, social networking sites serve as platforms for electronic word-of-mouth, facilitating information about products and services to spread rapidly among users. This digital word of mouth has a significant reach due to the widespread accessibility of the Internet. As users share and repost comments about promoted products, their networks are exposed to the message, amplifying its outreach. (Dolega et al., 2017)

What is the mean E- WORD OF MOUTH?

E-word of mouth refers to the contemporary method of disseminating products or services through digital platforms such as social media and online reviews, involving the sharing of individuals' opinions, recommendations and feedback. Which may have an impact on future purchases from new and usual costumers, since positive E-WOM has shown to increase trust and loyalty of the individual. (Sen et al., 2017)

Nevertheless, it relevant to note that the succes of WOM is determined by the quality of the incentives used to advertise the service/product. Marketers commonly use incentives such as monetary rewards for customers to advocate for a specific brand, this is believed to boost consumer experience based on economic theory. However, some psychologists argue that an increase of incentives might decrease individuals' willingness to engage.

To demonstrate this, a study examined this within the context of recommending Apple computers, a popular brand among US college students. Participants were asked to recommend the brand both without any monetary incentive and with a small monetary reward. Results indicated that monetary incentives decreased participants' motivation and

led to shorter recommendations in comparison to those without these rewards.
(Anghelcev, 2017)

For this reason, it is crucial to evaluate E-WOD strategies before implementation due to the easy spread of information across social platforms, a negative or low engaged reviews can significantly impact perception. (BigCommerce, n.d.)

In 2014, over 80% of business executives acknowledged social media as a crucial component of their operations. Business retailers saw a remarkable increase of 133% in surge in revenue through social media marketing. Over the years social networking websites have emerged, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Myspace, LinkedIn, Snapchat and Threads. (Dolega et al., 2017)

4. Benefits of social media

Social media presents various advantages, including enhancing brand visibility, facilitating direct interaction with costumers, providing cost-effective marketing options and enabling targeted audience.

Social media marketing aims to increase brand awareness, engaging directly with customers for feedback and support. Nevertheless, social media gives consumers the power to share opinions claiming transparency. This has led to the emergence of influencers who promote products online, particularly effective with younger consumers.

To maintain transparency, regulatory bodies like the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) and the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) have issued guidelines requiring influencers to disclose paid endorsements using hashtags (#spon or #ad). This practice of leveraging social media influencers to promote products or services is known as influencer marketing. (ASA, 2023)

5. Digital Media

In mass communication, digital media refers to any communication form that uses machine-readable data formats. This includes accessible, distributable, modifiable, and

preservable content on digital electronic devices. Digital media encompasses multiple formats such as text, audio, video, and graphics, which are transmitted over the internet for viewing or listening. Popular digital media platforms like YouTube, Vimeo, and Twitch contributed to billions of hours of viewership in 2020, playing a significant role in the digital revolution due to their interconnected nature. (Smith, 2013)

What is the difference between social media and digital media?

Social media consists of connecting and sharing content through popular platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. Conversely, digital media encompasses all online content, including websites, blogs, and online advertisements, extending beyond just social networking platforms. (Yashina, 2024)

Conclusion

The digital age has revolutionized marketing and communication, providing businesses with powerful tools such as social media and digital platforms to engage a wider audience. By employing targeted ads, creating compelling content, collaborating with influencers, and building online communities, companies can expand their reach and attract new customers. Data analysis plays a crucial role in refining marketing strategies, which in turn, boosts interaction and conversion rates across online channels. However, social media's transparent influence has shifted power to consumers, as influencers shape opinions. Therefore, transparency in digital endorsements is crucial. Digital media encompasses diverse formats and platforms, facilitating the interconnected digital landscape. While social media focuses on interaction, digital media spans broader content delivery. Effective use of both can drive brand presence and growth. Understanding the distinction between these two channels is essential for businesses to leverage them for engagement and brand expansion in today's digital realm.

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